

50 Years of Sannyāsa

**The Ecstatic Renunciation of
Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja**





Contents

- 3 *Pranati — Obeisances*
- 4 *Editorial — Contemplations*
- 7 *Sannyasa in the Age of Quarrel*
By Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
- 7 *Merciful Lord Govinda Took Sannyasa*
By Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja
- 16 *Pushpanjali — Offerings*
* Bhakti Purushottam Swami Maharaja
* Giriraja Swami Maharaja
* Jayapataka Swami Maharaja
* Krishna Kshetra Swami Maharaja
* Niranjana Swami Maharaja
* Partha Sarathi Das Goswami Maharaja
* Romapada Swami Maharaja
* Sarva-drik Das Prabhu
- 27 *The Living Mridangas of Sri Chaitanya*
By Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada
- 31 *Principles of Sannyasa*
By Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode
- 33 *Gour Govinda Maharaja's Acceptance of Sannyasa*
- 39 *Gour Govinda Maharaja's Diary on Taking Sannyasa*
- 40 *Srila Gurudeva's Sannyasa*
By Kalakantha Das

Published by ISKCON Bhubaneswar
Founder Acarya His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
1,000 copies printed on 4 April 2025





Pranati

नम ॐ विष्णु-पादाय कृष्ण-प्रेष्ठाय भू-तले।
श्रीमते गौर-गोविन्द-स्वामिन् इति नामिने॥

nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate gaura-govinda-svāmin iti nāmine

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja, who is very dear to Lord Krishna, having taken shelter at his lotus feet.

नमस्ते अभय प्रिय गौर भाव प्रकाशने।
नित्यानन्द कृपा-सिन्धु गोपाल सर्व दर्शिने।

namaste abhaya priya gaura bhāva prakāśine
nityānanda kṛpā-sindhu gopāla sarva darśine

“Hey Abhaya-priya (dearliest disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada), the revealer of the inner mood of Sriman Mahaprabhu, the ocean of Sri Nityananda’s mercy who sees Sri Gopal everywhere, please accept my repeated *pranāms* at your lotus feet.

गौराग्रगण्यगणगोत्रगलोरुहारं
गौराङ्गगूढतमगोप्यदकल्पवृक्षम्।
गोपालगाढरतिदं यतिसिंहगौर-
गोविन्ददेशिकवरं सततं नमामि॥

gaurāgraganya-gaṇa-gotra-galoruhāraṁ
gaurāṅga-gūḍhatama-gopyada-kalpa-vṛkṣam
gopāla-gāḍha-ratidaṁ yati-siṁha-gaura-
govinda-deśika-varaṁ satataṁ namāmi

To the brilliant garland around the neck of the league of prominent associates of Lord Gaura; To the desire tree bestowing the topmost secrets of Lord Gauranga; To the giver of condensed love for Gopal — to the lion like *sannyāsī* Gaura Govinda Swami, the eminent spiritual teacher I constantly offer my obeisances.





ISKCON Founder Acarya His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada walking in Mayapur in 1974. Gour Govinda Maharaja as a vānaprastha is on the right. The photo was taken a few months before Srila Prabhupada gave him sannyāsa

EDITORIAL Contemplations

This magazine attempts to explore and understand, to the best that we can, the astonishing renunciation of Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja. One of the primary duties of a disciple is *vidmahe* — to try to understand the mood of guru. That is done by, *dhīmahī* — contemplating the *kṛṣṇānandāya* — “the joy that gurudeva gets in connection with Krishna.” The result is *tan no guruḥ pracodayāt* — meditation on the inner mood and happiness of guru then inspires and empowers the disciple (*pracodayāt*).

Renunciation of material life is very difficult for conditioned souls to fathom. The general idea in this world is that life is meant for sense enjoyment. This is summed up in a popular bumper sticker in the USA that states, “Whoever dies with the most toys wins.”

There are many different conceptions about renunciation or *sannyāsa*. In *Bhagavad-gīta* (18.7-9) Krishna explains how renunciation may be in the modes of goodness, passion, or ignorance. Most renunciation is reaction-based — inspired by disgust and suffering. It’s said that a *bhogī* — an enjoyer

of sense gratification, due to their activities of enjoyment gradually becomes a *rogī*, or sick patient. At that time such diseased persons are forced to give up sense gratification, thereby becoming some form of *yogīs* or renunciates.

Aside from such persons, there are the strict followers of the Vedas who take up renunciation especially at the age of fifty as enjoined by *varnāśrama*. This type of *sannyāsa* was described by our revered spiritual master, Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami as “*karma-sannyāsa*”. Much higher than that motivation is the purpose within our *Gauḍīya* line wherein devotees generally take up renunciation for the purpose of preaching Krishna consciousness. Again, there are others — even in the devotional line — who take *sannyāsa* for prestige and position. Gour Govinda Maharaja spoke about this in a lecture in Bhubaneswar on 27 November 1991:

“Those who are so-called renunciates, who have given up everything, say, ‘Money, *artha* is the cause of all sorts of *anarthas*, so we have given it up.’ They say, ‘I have given up my wife, given up my family, given up my son, given up my relatives — everything I have given up.’ Yet they have not given up the pride that, ‘I have given up everything.’ Such pride is there, *garbha*. In this world you will find, beginning from a boy to an old man that all are running after this *pratiṣṭhā*, name, fame and prestige. ... *pratiṣṭhā* is very difficult to give up.”

You will also find in this *sādhū samaja* — *sādhū* community — that one poses himself as a great renunciate. He has only one *kaupīna*, nothing else. Some only use the bark of the tree, such great renunciates. He never stays in one place for more than one day, he moves about because, “Otherwise I will develop some attachment to this place”. Every day he goes out and gets some *mādhukarī*, alms. He is wandering in the jungle of Vrajabhumi and getting *mādhukarī* — such a great renunciate. He never builds a cottage for himself. He may stay anywhere; under a tree. Outwardly he has become very *niskīncana*, *akīncana*, a great renunciate. But he has not given up the pride that I am a great renunciate. He has the motive of *pratiṣṭhā*-*viṣṭhā* [*viṣṭhā* means “stool”].

In a darshan, in New Mayapur, France, on 29 July 1991, a devotee asked our Guru Maharaja:

Devotee: Sometimes devotees have taken *sannyāsa* in our movement because they have been frustrated in family life. Family life is troublesome. They don’t want that trouble anymore, so they reject it and take *sannyāsa*.

Gour Govinda Swami: There is no such *sannyāsa* in our line. That is *karma-sannyāsa*, *jñāna-sannyāsa*, and it is in the *māyāvādī* line.

Devotee: But devotees in ISKCON have taken *sannyāsa* for that reason.

Gour Govinda Swami: But in our *vaiṣṇava* line, no such *sannyāsa* is there. There is only one *sannyāsa*, complete surrender unto the lotus feet of Krishna. Therefore, you take up this *tri-daṇḍa* — *kāya-daṇḍa*, *vāk-daṇḍa*, *mano-daṇḍa* — three staffs, indicating surrender of the body, the words, and the mind.

Devotee: For instance, previously many people took *sannyāsa* mainly because they were frustrated with family life. They weren’t necessarily willing to serve Krishna.

Gour Govinda Swami: That is all cheating. That is not *sannyāsa*.

To try to understand the mood of renunciation of Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja we can contemplate a verse given by Srila Lochan Das Thakur in the introduction to his *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala* (1.1.113), wherein he has described the astonishing nature of the renunciation of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu:



*aneka rahasya kathā kahiba tāhāte
vairāgya adbhuta prabhura uṭhe yenamate*

I will tell many secrets, such as the secrets of the Lord’s wonderful renunciation.

In chapter seven of *Prema-vilāsa*, in a conversation with Lokanath Goswami, Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu explains two purposes for his taking *sannyāsa*. The first is for preaching and giving *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* to the conditioned souls. He then describes his inner reason:

*e bāhya vicāra āra manera āśaya
śuna lokanātha ihā kahila niścaya
rādhikāra bhāva lañā saba prayojana
kebā bujhe kebā śune yei mora mana*



The anguish of Sachimata at the house of Adwaita Acharya shortly after Mahaprabhu took sannyāsa

“This (previous reason) is My external consideration. Listen, O Lokanath! Accepting the mood of Radha is My only necessity. Who is there who can listen to or understand the state of My mind? (Texts 122-123)

This inner necessity of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu expressed in the form of his taking *sannyāsa* was deeply contemplated by Srila Gour Govinda Maharaja. In a diary entry on 10 October 1973, he wrote to his beloved *iṣṭadeva* Gopal:

Today there was a *mahotsava*, a great festival. *Prasādam* was distributed and *bāla-gopāla-līlā*, your childhood pastimes, were recited. Prabhu Gopal, for a long time I have had a desire to hear songs of *māna-bhañjana-līlā*, stories of how Krishna breaks the sulkiness of Srimati Radharani. *Prema-mayī* Radharani had developed *abhimāna*, loving pride, and Krishna was experiencing intense *viraha-kāṭara*, pangs of separation, because Radha would not permit him to see her. Therefore, there was a need for *māna-bhañjana*. Today, by the mercy of Prabhu, it happened. *Vṛndāvana-bihārī*, Krishna, became *rādhā-prema-bhikārī*, a beggar of Radha’s love. My Gopal dressed up like a *sannyāsī* to beg *prema-dhana* from Radharani.

O Prabhu Gopal, please make me a *yogī*, a *sannyāsī* like that! I don’t need anything, Prabhu. I am not asking you for material opulence, respect, glory, or anything else. You may give those things to my younger brother Kripasindhu. Let him maintain

your family. Make me a *saṁsāra-vairāgī-yogī*, a renunciate of family life. Let me beg that *prema-dhana*, that wealth of love of Godhead! Let me distribute *prema* and *ānanda*! Let me serve you! Please shower this mercy on me, Prabhu! Please bless me with *prema-bhakti*, ecstatic love for you!

We hope that this journal can provide a tiny glimpse into understanding the heart-felt purposes of our revered spiritual master Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja in his acceptance of the renounced order of life. We are grateful to Upendra Mishra Prabhu and the devotees of the ISKCON Sri Sri Krishna Balaram Mandir in Bhubaneswar for giving us the opportunity to contemplate this most weighty and lofty subject. We hope that this magazine collection of thoughts on this topic brings some pleasure to our Gurudeva and to the bee-like essence seeking devotees who are always eager to taste the nectar of *rasa*.

— Śrī guru o *vaiṣṇava-kṛpā-prārthī*,
Madhavananda Das



Sannyasa in the Age of Kali

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

We pose certain commonly asked questions about *sannyāsa* in the following article, with answers from the teachings of Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

What is the proper etiquette of respect to be offered to a *sānnyāsī*?

One who does not offer respect to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to His deity in the temple, or to a *tridaṇḍī sannyāsī*, must undergo *prāyaścitta* [atonement]. If one does not offer obeisances to such a *sannyāsī*, the prescribed *prāyaścitta* is to fast for one day. (Purport to Cc. ādi 17.265)

Regarding your questions how to offer respects to *sannyāsīs*. Every *sannyāsī*, even if you see a *Māyāvādī sannyāsī*, offer him your respects — there will be no harm. As you have observed, we shall follow Lord Chaitanya’s instruction that we give all due respects to others regarding their position, but there is no need of associating with each of them. Even if one is *vaiṣṇava*, but not of good character, we can give him the *vaiṣṇava* respect, but we cannot associate with him. (Letter to Jayapataka, 30 April 1970)

What is the definition of *sannyāsa*?

Sat nyāsa, sannyāsa. This is the combination. “*Sat*” means the Supreme, the ever-existing, and “*nyāsa*” means renunciation. That means one who has renounced everything for serving the Supreme, he is real *sannyāsa*. He may take this dress or not, that doesn’t matter. Anyone who has sacrificed his life for service of the Supreme Lord, he’s a *sannyāsī*. (Lecture in Los Angeles, 20 December 1968)

What is *tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa*?

There are four *daṇḍas*. One *daṇḍa* symbolizes the self, and the other three *daṇḍas* symbolize the body, mind, and words. ... So *tridaṇḍī-sannyāsī* means one who has devoted his life, meaning his body, his activities, and his words. Anyone who has devoted his mind, body and words for the service of the Lord, he is a *sannyāsī*. *Sannyāsī* does not



mean simply changing the dress and thinking otherwise. No. It does not matter whether the dress is changed or not. If one is fully engaged with his body, mind and words, he is a *sannyāsī*. (Lecture in Hawaii, 20 January 1974)

What are the qualifications to take *sannyāsa*?

Who has no more material desires, he is fit for taking *sannyāsa*. *Sarvopādhi. Anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam. Śūnyam* means zero. All material desires made into zero. Then *sannyāsa*. *Sannyāsī, anāśakta*. (Lecture in Melbourne, 29 June 1974)

No more desire of material enjoyment — he is fit for *sannyāsa*. Anyone who sees: “Oh, this car is very nice, a beautiful woman is very nice,” he should not think of taking *sannyāsa*. (Morning walk conversation in Mayapur, 26 February 1976)

Is taking *sannyāsa* required?

Not everyone can [take *sannyāsa*]. Especially in this age. Especially in your country, to take *sannyāsa* is a very difficult job. It should not be given; neither it should be taken. Actually, *sannyāsa* is forbidden in this age. But if one is very strong, he can accept *sannyāsa*. So better to remain a *gṛhastha* and cultivate Krishna consciousness. That is better. Don’t accept whimsically

sannyāsa and then do all nonsense. No. It is better to remain *gr̥hastha*. But not *gr̥hamedhī*. *Gr̥hamedhī* means that he does not know anything else than to support the wife and children and live very comfortably, well-dressed, and... That is called *gr̥hamedhī*. His center is only that apartment. He does not know anything more than that apartment. That is called *gr̥hamedhī*. And *gr̥hastha* means that he knows many things, Krishna, beyond this apartment. (Lecture in Paris, 9 June 1974)

Preach — that is *sannyāsa*. What is the use of changing dress? Do, actually. (Letter to Bhaktijana, 25 September, 1976)

There is no need of taking *sannyāsa*. If you are sincere in preaching, you can do in this dress. Where is the harm? Simply by changing, taking a rod, you'll not become God immediately. You have to work, steadily. What is there in *sannyāsa*? Do you mean to say that by taking a rod one becomes *sannyāsa*? *Sannyāsa* means you must be sacrificing everything for Krishna. That is *sannyāsa*. (Room Conversation in London, 15 August 1971)

Should one take *sannyāsa* before being qualified?

Don't cheat by accepting *sannyāsa* and indulging in these things. Don't be a cheater. That is very bad. *Sannyāsa* means to take a vow. In other stations of life there may be fall down, but *sannyāsa* means no fall down. Unless one is found completely competent to accept *sannyāsa*, there is no more use of awarding *sannyāsa*. (Lecture in Mayapur, 4 April 1975)

What is the duty of one who has left *sannyāsa* and married?

Especially in this age, Kali-yuga, it is advised that no one take *sannyāsa*.

aśvamedhaṁ gavāḽambhaṁ sannyāsaṁ pala-paitṛkam devareṇa sutotpattiṁ kalau pañca vivarjayet

[*Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, *kṛṣṇa-janma-khaṇḍa* 185.180 quoted in *Cc. ādi* 17.164]

From this, we can understand that in this age the *sannyāsa-āśrama* is forbidden because people are not strong. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu showed us an example in taking *sannyāsa* at the age of twenty-four years, but even Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya advised Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to be extremely careful because He had taken *sannyāsa* at an early age. For preaching, we give young boys *sannyāsa*, but actually it is being experienced

that they are not fit for *sannyāsa*. There is no harm, however, if one thinks that he is unfit for *sannyāsa*; if he is very much agitated sexually, he should go to the *āśrama* where sex is allowed, namely the *gr̥hastha-āśrama*. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 8.2.30)

You should not consider taking *sannyāsa* again, but in your country it is not a great thing. Although officially it is a fall down from *sannyāsa*, in your country no one understands *sannyāsa*. The more important principle is that we should purify our thoughts and engage them in Krishna's service. (Letter to Rupanuga, 8 June, 1974)

What is the purpose of giving *sannyāsa* in this age?

Of course, because Lord Chaitanya accepted this *sannyāsa*, so we are maintaining that system. The actual point of *sannyāsa* is not *mukti*, but is to satisfy Krishna. That is *sannyāsa* — how will Krishna be satisfied, how will Krishna's representative be satisfied. (Lecture in Bombay, 9 April 1971)

Following in His footsteps — we are preaching Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's cult and giving *sannyāsa* for preaching. That is not unauthorized. One who criticizes this action, he does not know the principle of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. (Lecture in Vrindavan, 16 October 1972)

Didn't Chaitanya Mahaprabhu reject *sannyāsa* in this age?

It is sometimes said that Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu disapproved of the acceptance of the *sannyāsa* order in this Kali-yuga, because in the *śāstra* it is said:

aśvamedhaṁ gavāḽambhaṁ sannyāsaṁ pala-paitṛkam devareṇa sutotpattiṁ kalau pañca vivarjayet

In this Age of Kali, five acts are forbidden: the offering of a horse in sacrifice, the offering of a cow in sacrifice, the acceptance of the order of *sannyāsa*, the offering of oblations of flesh to the forefathers, and a man's begetting children in his brother's wife.

Nevertheless, we see that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself accepted *sannyāsa* and approved of the *sannyāsa* of His elder brother, Visvarup. It is clearly said here:

bhāla haila, — viśvarūpa sannyāsa karila pitr̥-kula, mātṛ-kula, — dui uddhārila

Therefore, should we think that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu made contradictory statements? No, actually He did not. It is recommended that one



Walking with Srila Prabhupada in Mayapur in 1974

accept *sannyāsa* to dedicate his life for the service of the Lord. Everyone must take that kind of *sannyāsa*, for by accepting such *sannyāsa* one renders the best service to both his paternal and maternal families. But one should not accept the *sannyāsa* order of the *Māyāvāda* school, which has practically no meaning. We find many *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs* simply loitering in the street thinking themselves Brahman or Narayan, and spending all day and night begging so they can fill their hungry bellies. *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs* have become so degraded that there is a section of them who eat everything, just like hogs and dogs. This type of degraded *sannyāsa* is what is prohibited in this age. Actually, Srila Sankaracharya's principles for the acceptance of *sannyāsa* were very strict, but later the *Māyāvādī* so-called *sannyāsīs* became degraded because of their false philosophy, which propounds that by accepting *sannyāsa* one becomes Narayan. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu rejected that kind of *sannyāsa*. (Purport to Cc. ādi 15.14)

Did Chaitanya Mahaprabhu take *sannyāsa* from a *Māyāvādī sannyāsī*?

Yes. That is a formality. It is not very important. Because *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs*, they are also Vedic *sannyāsīs*. They are not outsiders. Their interpretation of Veda is different, but they follow the Vedic rules. Acceptance of *sannyāsa* is following the Vedic rules. So you can accept *sannyāsa* even from *Māyāvādī*. It doesn't matter. But you have to transcend the limits of the Vedic rules. That is Krishna consciousness. Although Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took *sannyāsa*, He did not assume the *sannyāsa* title. His *sannyāsa* guru was Keshava Bharati. So naturally He should have accepted the Bharati title. "Sri Krishna Bharati", or something like that. However, He remained as Sri Krishna Chaitanya. Chaitanya is the name of a *brahmacārī* under the guidance of Bharati *sannyāsīs*. But even after His acceptance of *sannyāsa*, He did not assume the title Bharati. That means that actually He did not take *sannyāsa*. That was simply a formality. *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs* think that they are God, But Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was preaching that we are servants of God. Therefore, He did not assume that title.

Besides that, when Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was going to Jagannath Puri, His rod was taken away by

Nityananda, Who broke it and threw it away. At that time He apparently became very angry, "You have broken My *sannyāsa* rod. So I am not going with You." And He separated from the party.

In one sense, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu did not require to accept any *sannyāsa* guru, but He accepted the formality that if one takes *sannyāsa*, one has to take *sannyāsa* from another *sannyāsī*. That is the system. Just like if you want to get married, you have to call for a priest. But it does not mean that you have to agree with the priest's personal opinion. (Lecture in Los Angeles, 27 November 1968)

Why did Srila Bhaktisiddhanta introduce saffron cloth and *sannyāsa*?

Actually, a *vaiṣṇava* is above *varṇāśrama-dharma*. But we don't claim that we have become perfect *vaiṣṇavas*. We are not so impudent. We want to remain under the *vaiṣṇavas*. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* you'll find that *vaiṣṇava* is *paramahansa*. A *vaiṣṇava* has no saffron cloth. A *vaiṣṇava* wears white cloth because *vaiṣṇava* is *paramahansa*. We don't claim the position of *vaiṣṇava*. We want to remain the servants of the *vaiṣṇavas*. Therefore, this *sannyāsa* order is below the position of *vaiṣṇava*. The order of *sannyāsa* is a material classification, but *vaiṣṇava* is *paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām*, a *paramahansa* free from envy [Bhāg. 1.1.2], and, *sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*, above the material modes of nature [Bg. 14.26].

The position of being a *vaiṣṇava* is not an easy thing. It is above all material qualities. Therefore, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur introduced *sannyāsa* so as not to become imitators of Rupa, Sanatan, the Goswamis of Vrindavan — they are *paramahansas*.

... The *paramahansa* stage should not be imitated. To stop this imitation, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur introduced this system, *sannyāsa*. He personally became a *sannyāsī*, and he gave *sannyāsa* to many of his disciples. (Lecture in Mayapur, 21 October 1974)

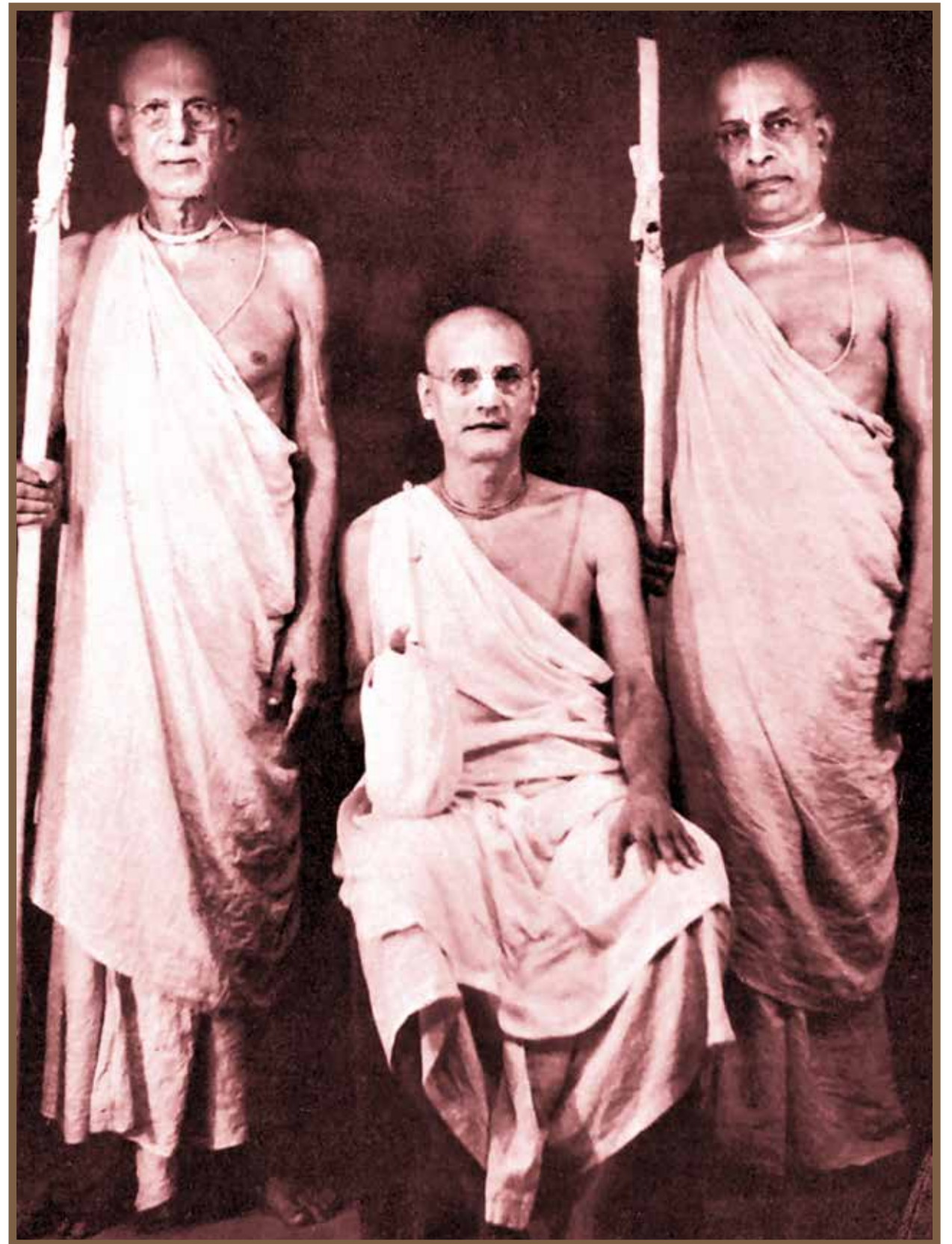


Photo from the morning of 17 September 1959 at the Keshavaji Gaudiya Math in Mathura. Left to right: Muni Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada's *sannyāsa* guru Srila Bhakti Prajnan Keshava Maharaja, and Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada on the occasion of Muni Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada's taking *sannyāsa*.

Merciful Lord Govinda Took Sannyasa

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

A lecture in Bhubaneswar, 17 May 1991

*more nā mānile saba loka habe nāśa
ithi lāgi’ kṛpārdra prabhu karila sannyāsa*

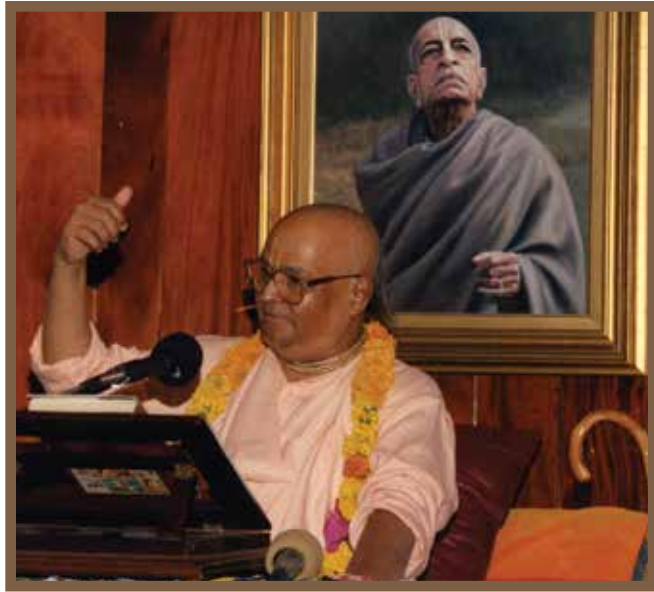
Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu thought, “Unless people accept Me, they will all be destroyed.” Thus the merciful Lord accepted the *sannyāsa* order.

PURPORT In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (12.3.51) it is said, *kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet* — “Simply by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, or Lord Krishna’s name, one is liberated and goes back home, back to Godhead.” This Krishna consciousness must be achieved through the mercy of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. One cannot be complete in Krishna consciousness unless he accepts Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His associates as the only means for success. It is because of these considerations that the Lord accepted *sannyāsa*, for thus people would offer Him respect and very quickly come to the platform of Krishna consciousness. Since Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Krishna Himself, inaugurated the Krishna consciousness movement, without His mercy one cannot be elevated to the transcendental platform of Krishna consciousness.

(Cc. ādi 8.10, translation and purport by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.)

* * *

Because He came in the mood of a devotee, *mūḍhās*, rascals, cannot accept Gaurahari as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Gauranga Mahaprabhu assumed the attitude of a devotee — *bhakta bhāva anḡikāra*. He is Krishna Himself, the object of the love of the devotees, but He came instead as a devotee, the possessor of love for Krishna. Why? To personally teach *bhakti*. Demonstrating in His life by His own example, He is teaching how to surrender unto Krishna.



Krishna came five thousand years ago in His original form. On the battlefield of Kuruksetra, He gave His most confidential instruction:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“Give up all varieties of dharma and surrender unto my lotus feet.” That is *bhakti*, that is *ātma-vṛtti*, the activity of the soul, *ātma-dharma*. Surrender unto the lotus feet of Krishna, and engagement in His loving service, is the soul’s dharma. Krishna instructed this theoretically. He is the only well-wishing friend of the living entities, therefore, while in His abode He thought: “O, I have only said this theoretically. I have not practically demonstrated it. So the people, especially those of *kali-yuga*, cannot understand it, they cannot practice it in their lives. So I must go again.” Therefore, He came again in *Kali-yuga* as a *bhakta*. Mahaprabhu said (Cc. ādi 3.2):

*āpani karimu bhakta-bhāva anḡikāre
āpani ācari’ bhakti śikhāimu sabāre*

I shall accept the role of a devotee, and I shall teach devotional service by practicing it Myself.

This is Mahaprabhu’s motto. Practice in your own life, then you can teach. Otherwise you have no right to teach. Theoretical speaking will not do. So, although He is *bhagavān*, He came as a *bhakta*. Some rascals speak like the demon Jarasandha.¹ They strictly follow Vedic regulative principles and worship Vishnu, but they don’t accept Krishna. That is demoniac. In other *yugas*, one or two such demons were there. But in *Kali-yuga*, all are demons.

Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself, but He came as a *bhakta*. How can the demons accept it? When he came as *bhagavān*, they did not accept, so what to speak of when He came as a devotee? Mahaprabhu knew this, and said (Cc. ādi 8.10):

*more nā mānile saba loka habe nāśa
ithi lāgi’ kṛpārdra prabhu karila sannyāsa*

Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu thought that unless people accept Him as the Supreme Lord, they would be destroyed. Thus the merciful Lord accepted the order of *sannyāsa*. The general etiquette in human society was that people offer respect to *sannyāsīs*, especially *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs*, because *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs* think themselves Lord Narayan. When they offer obeisances to a *Māyāvādī sannyāsī*, they say, *om namo nārāyaṇāya* — “I offer my obeisances to Lord Narayan.” These *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs* considered themselves to be Lord Narayan, and common people also accepted them as such. That was vogue in society then, and it is still current today. So Mahaprabhu took *sannyāsa* from *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs* for this reason. He is Narayan Himself, but He came as a *bhakta*. People were not being respectful to Him, were committing offenses, and were thereby destroying themselves. However, Mahaprabhu is so merciful. He is wonderfully merciful, wonderfully munificent, and wonderfully magnanimous. His mission in coming is to deliver everyone.

Mahaprabhu is the Lord. He thought, “If these people commit offense, they will be destroyed and My mission will fail.” So He took up *sannyāsa*. He thought, “If I take *sannyāsa*, then automatically they will offer Me respect and they will be delivered. Otherwise they won’t offer Me respect.” When the rascals and demons are not paying respect to Krishna, why will they pay respect to a devotee? In *Kali-yuga*, everyone is a demon.

So for this purpose He took *sannyāsa* from a *Māyāvādī sannyāsī*. However, He preached *vaiṣṇava-dharma* and Nityananda Prabhu broke his *Māyāvādī sannyāsī eka-daṇḍa*.²

Vaiṣṇava sannyāsīs carry three combined rods — *tri-daṇḍa*. Mahaprabhu took *ekadaṇḍi-sannyāsa*, because people respected *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs*. Therefore it says here, *ithi lāgi’ kṛpārdra prabhu karila sannyāsa* — the merciful Lord therefore accepted the order of *sannyāsa*. Otherwise people would not pay him respect. That was His purpose. Mahaprabhu is so merciful. One should understand Mahaprabhu, *gaura-tattva*, then he can understand *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, otherwise it is not possible to understand *kṛṣṇa-tattva*.

So when we open a temple, we install Jagannath, we install Krishna-Balaram, but we also install Gaurasundara. This is a

perfect temple. Without *gaura-bhakti*, without the mercy of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, no one can understand Krishna; no one can enter the path of Krishna consciousness. Without worshiping Mahaprabhu, one’s so-called *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is demoniac. The deity of Jagannath may be there, Krishna may be there, Radha Govinda may be there, but if there is no Gaura, it’s not complete, not perfect. The *bhakti* will be not complete. Rather, it will be non-devotional. Gaura must be there.

Without the mercy of Gaurasundara, no one can develop Krishna consciousness. That is why Mahaprabhu took up *sannyāsa*. Otherwise, what is the need for the Supreme Personality of Godhead to take *sannyāsa*? Mahaprabhu did not disregard social customs, because through those customs one should teach. It is not that all of a sudden one can disregard or change those customs. The *ācāryas* know this, and they act according to time, place, and circumstances. Otherwise, the teaching will be a failure. One should teach according to time, place and circumstances, and gradually they will come to the path of perfection. Not all of a sudden. Mahaprabhu knows this. So as an ideal teacher, ideal *ācārya*, ideal *sādhū*, He took *sannyāsa* from the *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs*.

There is also another reason. He came to deliver everyone, so the *Māyāvādīs* should also be delivered. Without the mercy of Gauranga, the *Māyāvādīs* would never be delivered. *Māyāvādī kṛṣṇa aparādhī* — they are great offenders at the lotus feet of Krishna, thinking themselves to be the Lord.

A similar pastime took place in Mahaprabhu’s *līlā* when He was in Vrindavan. There was a rumor that Krishna had appeared at Kaliya-daha.³

Many people were going there to have darshan of Krishna. In the morning, people were talking about it, saying that at night Krishna had appeared at Kaliya-daha and was dancing on the hoods of the serpent Kaliya. Mahaprabhu had a servant named Balabhadra Bhattacharya. He heard people saying that Krishna had appeared at Kaliya-daha, so one day he asked Mahaprabhu, “Please give me permission that I can go and have darshan of Krishna in Kaliya-daha. Many people are saying that He has appeared there, so I must go.” Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself. Balabhadra Bhattacharya was already with Krishna, yet he could not understand, because Mahaprabhu was acting like a devotee. So he spoke like this to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu then became angry, slapped him, and said, *kṛṣṇa kene daraśana dibe kali-kāle?*⁴

“Why would Krishna incarnate Himself in *Kali-yuga*?” Then Mahaprabhu said, “All right, tomorrow you can go.

Not today.” Later that day, some nice gentlemen came, and Mahaprabhu asked them, “Have you seen Krishna in Kaliya-daha at night?”

The gentlemen said, “No. That’s not Krishna. Every night a fisherman has been going with his net to Kaliya-ghat to catch fish. When people saw him from a distance, his boat looked like the Kaliya serpent, the boatman looked like Krishna standing on the hoods of Kaliya, and his torch looked like the jewels on the snake’s hood. Because of this, people have been saying that Krishna has appeared. But it is not the real fact.”

Mahaprabhu then told Balabhadra Bhattacharya, “You see? You nonsense. *kṛṣṇa kene daraśana dibe kali-kāle?* — Why will Krishna give darshan in Kali-yuga? Nonsense.” *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* describes: (*madhya* 18.109-110)

*prabhu kahe,—‘kāhān pāilā kṛṣṇa daraśana?’
loka kahe,—‘sannyāsī tumi jaṅgama-nārāyaṇa*

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then asked them, “Where have you seen Krishna directly?” The people replied, “You are a *sannyāsī*, a renunciant; therefore You are a moving Narayan [*jaṅgama-nārāyaṇa*].”

*vrndāvane ha-ilā tumi kṛṣṇa-avatāra
tomā dekhi’ sarva-loka ha-ila nistāra*

The people then said, “You have appeared in Vrindavan as an incarnation of Krishna. Just by seeing You, everyone is now liberated.”

These people said, “You are Narayan.” And actually He is Narayan. “We see Narayan here. You have come to Vrindavan, so Krishna has incarnated Himself in Vrindavan. That is You. So we are all delivered now.” Mahaprabhu closed his ears and said: (*Cc. madhya* 18.111-113)

*prabhu kahe,—‘viṣṇu’ ‘viṣṇu’ ihā nā kahibā!
jīvādhame ‘kṛṣṇa’-jñāna kabhu nā karibā!*

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu immediately exclaimed, “Vishnu! Vishnu! Do not call Me the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A *jīva* cannot become Krishna at any time. Do not even say such a thing!

*sannyāsī—cit-kaṇa jīva, kiraṇa-kaṇa-sama
ṣaḍ-aiśvarya-pūrṇa kṛṣṇa haya sūryopama*

“A *sannyāsī* in the renounced order is certainly part and parcel of the complete whole, just as a shining molecular particle of sunshine is part and parcel of the sun itself. Krishna is like the sun, full of six opulences, but the living entity is only a fragment of the complete whole.

*jīva, īśvara-tattva—kabhu nahe ‘sama
jvalad-agni-rāśi yaiche sphuliṅgera ‘kaṇa’*

“A living entity and the Absolute Personality of Godhead are never to be considered equal, just as a fragmental spark can never be considered the original flame.”

This is Mahaprabhu’s teaching. He said, “No, no, no! Vishnu! Vishnu! Don’t speak like that. I am a mere *jīva*. I am not Narayan. I am not Krishna”. Actually, He is Krishna Himself. “I am a mere *jīva*. Don’t say that a *jīva* is Narayan or Krishna. That is offense.” — *jīvādhame ‘kṛṣṇa’-jñāna kabhu nā karibā!* Mahaprabhu was posing Himself as an ordinary *jīva* for teaching *bhakti*. He said, *sannyāsī — cit-kaṇa jīva, kiraṇa-kaṇa-sama* — “I am a *sannyāsī*, I am a mere *jīva*. I am not Krishna. I am just a spark from the spiritual sun of Krishna. Krishna is *ṣaḍ-aiśvarya-pūrṇa* — unlimitedly full with six types of opulence. He is as effulgent as the spiritual sun.”

People accept a *Māyāvādī sannyāsī* as Narayan. In order to correct that misconception, Mahaprabhu said, “No, a *sannyāsī* is a *jīva*. He is not Narayan. I am a *jīva*. Narayan or Krishna is *ṣaḍ-aiśvarya-pūrṇa*, full in six opulences.

In this way, Mahaprabhu was teaching. He took *sannyāsa* from *Māyāvādī sannyāsīs*, and accepted *eka-daṇḍa*, the single staff of the *Māyāvāda* school. People would accept Him, offer obeisances to Him, and thereby they would not commit any offenses and be delivered. Although He took *sannyāsa* in the *Māyāvāda* line, He was teaching *bhakti-tattva*. Therefore, when people addressed Him as Narayan, He said, “No, no, no! I am not Narayan. Narayan is Krishna. A *sannyāsī* is a mere *jīva*. Don’t accept a *sannyāsī* as Narayan.” Using *sannyāsa*, He was teaching in this way. This is how an ideal *ācārya* teaches according to time, place and circumstance.

Endnotes

1 Jarasandha was a king at the time of Lord Krishna. Although he was very learned in the Vedic literatures, Jarasandha was critical of Krishna and did not accept Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

2 The *sannyāsīs* in the line of Sripad Sankaracharya accept a *sannyāsa* staff consisting of only one rod (*eka-daṇḍa*). Lord Nityananda Prabhu broke Mahaprabhu’s *eka-daṇḍa* into three pieces indicating the ideal of *vaiṣṇava tridaṇḍī-sannyāsa* that one should offer one’s mind, body and words to the lord.

3 The lake in the Yamuna river where Krishna punished Kaliya.

4 *Cc. madhya* 18.101.





IDEAL EXAMPLE

Bhakti Purushottam Swami Maharaja

I am very happy to see the devotees in ISKCON Bhubaneswar putting on this festival for Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja’s 50th *sannyāsa* anniversary. Gour Govinda Maharaja was a powerful and learned preacher, but he was also a *sādhū* who taught by his personal example. By his dedication and devotional renunciation, he was an ideal *sannyāsī*. — Bhakti Purushottam Swami.

GOUR GOVINDA SWAMI’S KINDNESS

Giriraja Swami Maharaja

In 1996, in Mayapur, some days before Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura’s appearance day, I received a telegram from my father saying that he had had a stroke and that although he was apparently out of danger, he still would like me to come. In the twenty-five years since I had joined, my father had never really asked me for anything, and after consulting some of my close godbrothers, I decided I should go. I got my reservation to leave on Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura’s appearance day, but before I left, I wanted to see Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu, who happened to be upstairs in the GBC conference room with the educational subcommittee. As I entered, I saw, seated at the table just to my left, His Holiness Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja. He had come late for the meetings and had just arrived in Mayapur the night before. As I had not seen him since he had arrived, I took the opportunity to bow down and place my head at his lotus feet, and in his affectionate way he rubbed my back. He smiled at me warmly and looked at me with his eyes full of love and brightness and bliss. I explained to Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu that I would be leaving, and again I looked at Maharaja. We exchanged happy glances and smiles, and I left.

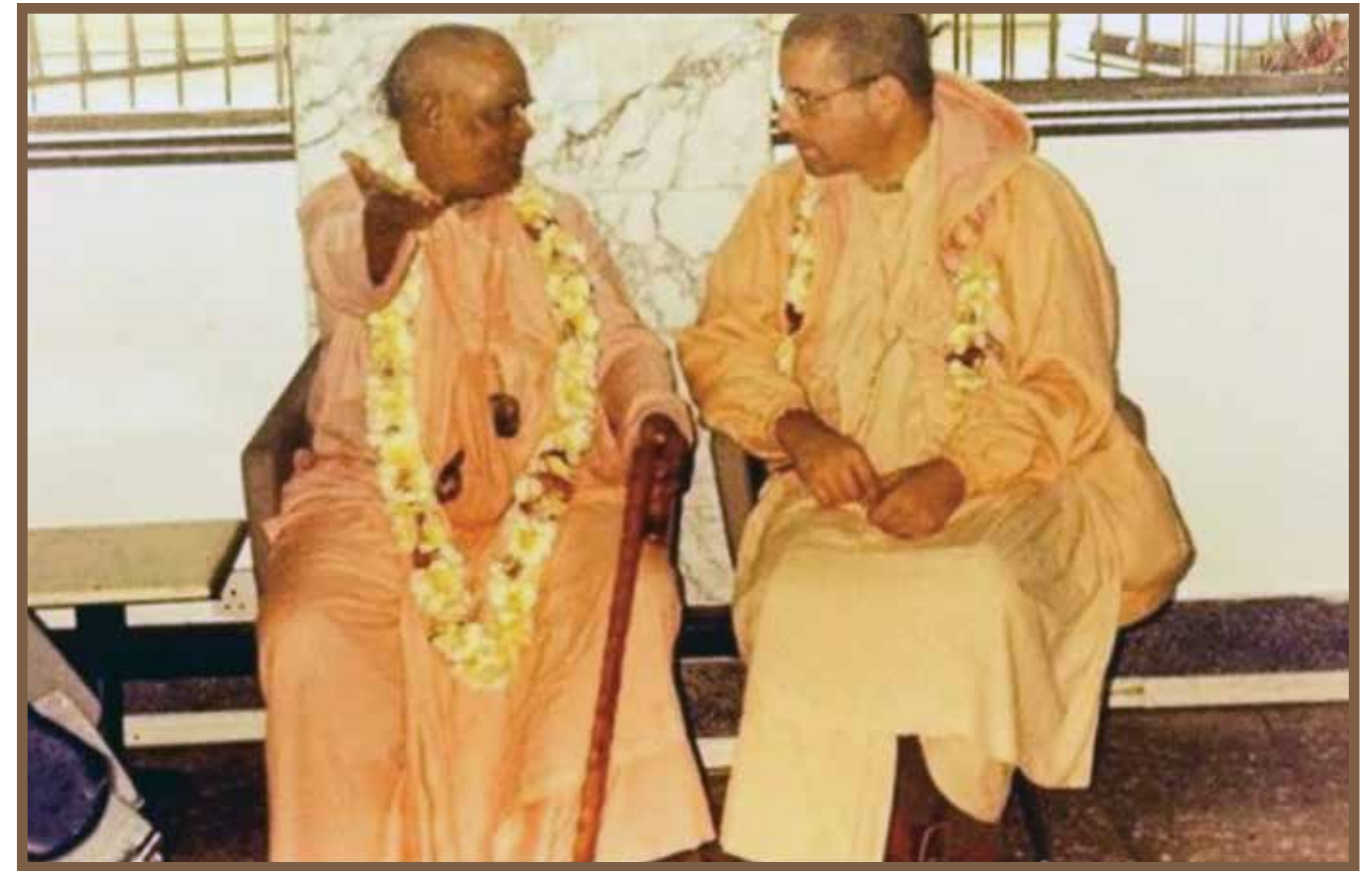
Only some weeks later did I find out that on the very day I had left Mayapur His Divine Grace Sripad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja had left his body. From Mayapur I had gone to Miami, where my father was in the hospital, and



only after I accompanied my father to Chicago and spoke to the devotees there did I learn of Maharaja’s departure. At first I couldn’t believe it, but then His Holiness Radhanath Swami came to visit me, and he confirmed the news.

My association with His Holiness Gour Govinda Maharaja goes back many years. I first heard of him from Bhagavata dasa Prabhu, a friend of mine who had served with me in Bombay and with Maharaja in Bhubaneswar. He told me about the saintly person who lived in a grass hut and was translating Srila Prabhupada’s books into Odia. So, even before I got to know His Holiness, I had a very favorable impression of him from Bhagavata dasa.

But I really got to know Maharaja when he came to Mauritius. Mauritius is a small island in the Indian Ocean, between India and Africa. At its widest, it is forty miles across — at its longest, sixty. At that time Maharaja was very seriously translating Srila Prabhupada’s *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* into Odia to have it ready in time for Srila Prabhupada’s Centennial. Still, we got the opportunity to have many wonderful exchanges. Whenever he drove from the temple in the town of Phoenix to the temple at the farm in Bon Accueil, we would ride together and discuss. So I had many opportunities to speak with him. Also in classes—he would give very long classes, and at the end I would ask questions. Once, at the farm in Bon Accueil, I referred to the verses in



Discussing with Giriraja Maharaja at the airport in Mauritius

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*madhya* 22.128–129) about the five most potent forms of devotional service:

sādhū-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana

“One should associate with devotees, chant the holy name of the Lord, hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, reside at Mathura, and worship the deity with faith and veneration.

sakala-sādhana-śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga
kṛṣṇa-prema janmāya ei pāñcera alpa saṅga

“These five limbs of devotional service are the best of all. Even a slight performance of these five awakens love for Krishna.”

I told him how much I cherished *mathurā-vāsa*, residing in Mathura (or Vrindavan). Maharaja replied, “Kamsa also resided in Mathura, but still he was a demon.” He spoke these words to me with great love and compassion. And I felt that he was seeing straight into my polluted heart and acting to purify it. He instructed me that the goal was not to reside in Mathura but to actually develop the consciousness of a devotee.

Anyway, we discussed so many things. Even at the airport before he left, we spoke for an hour and a half, very intimately. He mentioned the predicted ten-thousand-

year golden age within *Kali-yuga*, giving some reference for it and expressing his hope that ISKCON would usher it in. And he told me about himself and about his first meeting with Srila Prabhupada, how Srila Prabhupada had engaged him, and how later he had brought Srila Prabhupada to Odisha. He also told me how he had found guidance after Srila Prabhupada left, how he had developed the notebooks he kept with various verses, and how he would quote from the notebooks when he gave class. He told me so many things.

I remember his eyes — they always seemed moist with tears of love, tears of joy, and his voice was always full of affection and enthusiasm and the ecstasy of realization. In my mind’s eye, even now, I can see his eyes and his smile — his head slightly nodding, his eyes looking into mine, blinking, and his face smiling.

The other opportunities we had to meet and discuss came mainly in Juhu. Maharaja would often leave India from Bombay, and when he returned from his tours abroad he would also come through Bombay and stay in the Juhu guesthouse. There, too, we had many wonderful



Giving a class at the temple farm in Murwillumbah Australia

discussions. One evening, I had a preaching program, but before leaving the temple I wanted to visit him in his room and just offer my respects. When I did, he suddenly began to describe a most wonderful pastime of Radha and Krishna and how they were assisted by Vrindadevi. Once, when Krishna failed to meet Radharani at the appointed time and place, She sent her girlfriends (*sakhīs*) to investigate. And when they reported that they had found him at the secret grove of her rival Chandravali, Radha manifested the ecstasy of transcendental loving jealous anger (*māna*), and thereafter she refused to meet him. Distraught, Krishna tried in so many ways to break her *māna*, but nothing he said or did would pacify her. Finally, Vrindadevi came to him and advised him to disguise himself as a *sannyāsī* and beg some charity from her. When he did, Sri Radha could not refuse, and she gave him what he asked — *prema*. And thus, the Divine Couple was happily reunited. I had heard and read many pastimes, but I had never heard this particular one — and he was narrating it in such an

animated way. I was enchanted and did not want to leave. But time was passing, and it was getting later and later for the program. Still, I could not tear myself away. Finally, he concluded, and I told him I had to go for a preaching program. And so, I left, feeling very enlivened by the *kṛṣṇa-kathā* he had so kindly narrated.

His Holiness Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja was — and is — a most extraordinary devotee. Although he was advanced in age and his health was frail, he took the trouble to travel all over the world like a young man, preach the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Prabhupada, and enliven the devotees. He was a great and magnanimous soul. Other devotees have documented his purity, his presentation of the philosophy, and his achievements and contributions to the movement. Here I just wanted to relate my own experiences with him—and feelings for him.

We miss him. Such souls are rare indeed. He was a great source of strength to the movement. But although he has left, his legacy continues. Just last week I received a copy of *Sri Krishna Kathamrita*. The whole issue was dedicated to the subject of *vaiṣṇava-aparādhā*, “the mad elephant offense,” and from the quality of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* in the magazine, the intelligence with which the articles were conceived and arranged, I felt, “Yes, his legacy is continuing. His disciples and followers are continuing his mission.” I felt very enlivened by the purity of the *kathā* in the magazine. I felt both chastened and inspired.

Maharaja himself assured us that we can get association and guidance even after the spiritual master leaves this world. How? Through the guru’s instructions and through the instructions of shastra and sadhu — by the guru’s mercy. He said:

“The instruction of guru is also guru. You’ll get *guru-kṛpā*, the mercy of the guru, through his instructions, *vāṇī*. One who is very, very eager and very, very inquisitive will pray to his spiritual master, ‘O spiritual master, you are not physically present, so I cannot understand. I am such an ignorant fool. I have no qualification. Though your instructions are there, I cannot understand what you have said. Please help me.’ The guru will come, but not in the same form. He may come in the form of a sadhu, a very dear devotee, who is also very dear to your spiritual master. Through him, knowledge will be revealed. Doubts will be cleared. Through him, you will be able to understand *tattva*, purport. You should think, ‘My guru is teaching me, speaking to me in this form.’ Don’t think,



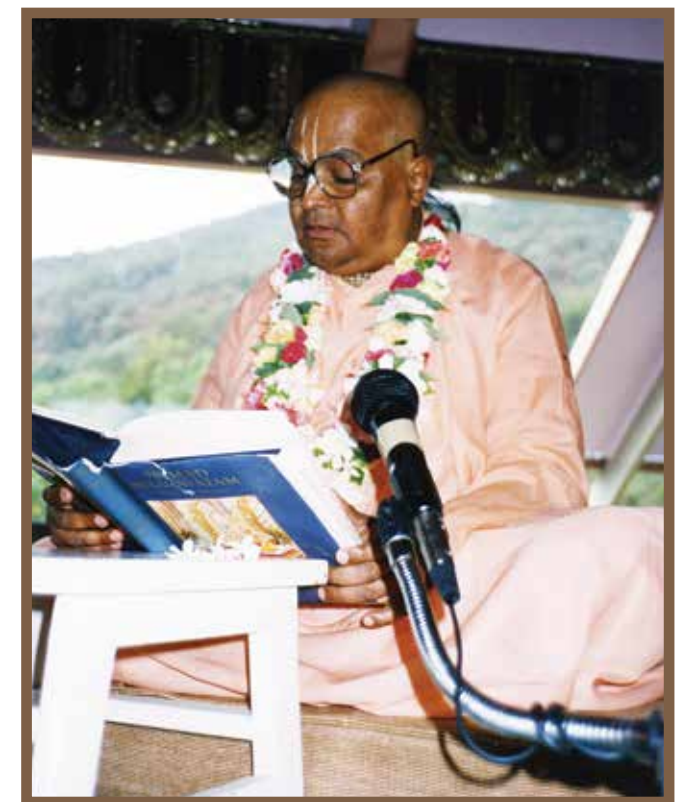
New Govardhan Farm in Murwillumbah Australia

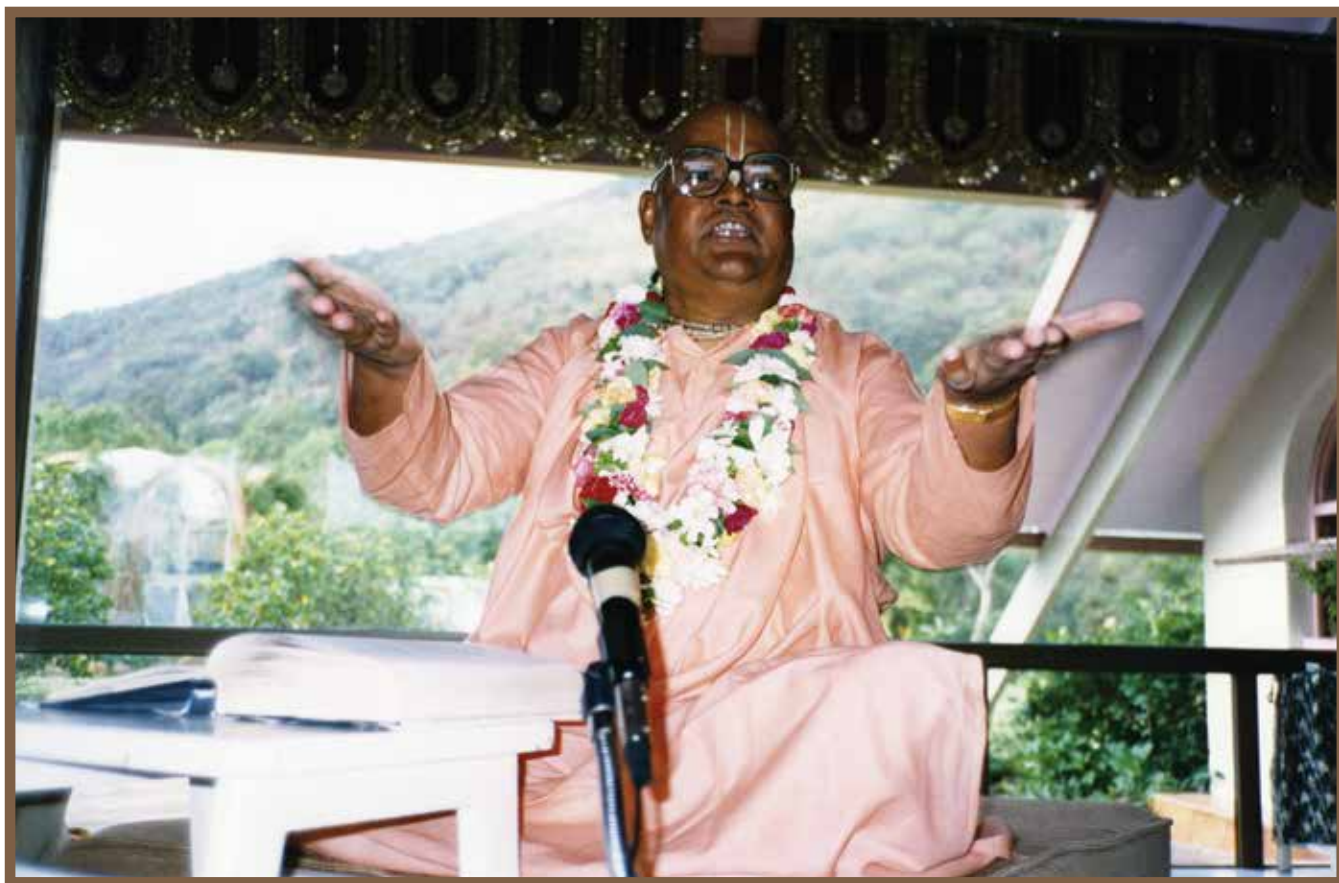
‘My guru is not here. He has departed. What shall I do?’ Pray fervently to your spiritual master. He must help you. We have personal experience. We have been helped in this way. Also, the great *mahājānas*, *ācāryas* have said this. It is an eternal process. Krishna is eternal, and his teachings are eternal. The process is also eternal. But we should be very, very inquisitive. One should not feel desperate. There is no reason to be pessimistic. We should be full of optimism in this process.” (*My Revered Spiritual Master*, chapter 18. From a darshan in Paris, 18 July 1986.)

I conclude with the immortal words of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur inscribed at the tomb of Thakur Haridas in Jagannath Puri:

He reasons ill who says that *Vaiṣṇavas* die,
When thou art living still in sound!
The *Vaiṣṇavas* die to live, and living try
To spread the holy name around.

I never fully realized until now how much I love Maharaja. It is certainly his kindness upon me, and I pray that he, from his position, will bless me that I may be a good servant of my spiritual master, Srila





Prabhupada, and ultimately become qualified to serve Sri Sri Radha-Govinda (Gopal Jiu).

Hare Krishna.

Your servant,

Giriraj Swami

HIS DEDICATION TO SERVE SRILA PRABHUPADA

Jayapataka Swami Maharaja

I was told that this *Rāma-navamī* marks fifty years of Srila Gour Govinda Goswami Maharaja accepting the sacred order of *sannyāsa* from Srila Prabhupada.

From 1971 till 1977, I hardly ever ventured outside of Mayapur. But in 1977, Srila Prabhupada called all of the senior devotees, *sannyāsīs*, to come to Bhubaneswar. And there we were staying in a tent, and Srila Prabhupada was in a *bhajana-kuṭīra*. At that time, we had the opportunity to see how merciful Srila Prabhupada was to Srila Gour Govinda Goswami, how close of a relationship they had, and how dedicated Gour Govinda Maharaja was to carry out the orders of Srila Prabhupada. During that time in Bhubaneswar, when we would sit on the ground, we

had to be careful because there were so many termites that would make so many holes in the *dhotī*. Different devotees found it difficult, but I could understand that Srila Prabhupada wanted something great to happen, and I could see the dedication of Srila Gour Govinda Maharaja. Next year or later in that year after the GBC meeting, Srila Prabhupada established the foundation stone, and the land was donated by the previous governor.

Then, by Lord Krishna's desire, I became a GBC member, and my zone was Bengal and Odisha. So, every year I had the opportunity to go and meet with Gour Govinda Maharaja. Srila Prabhupada had told him that there would be a foreign devotee who would help him, first he had Tejas Das and Caitanya Simha Das, but finally, Krishna sent so many devotees from all over the world to help him. At least one time, I failed to satisfy him. He wanted me to come on a preaching tour to Odisha. But I had already promised to go to Sri Lanka. After going to Sri Lanka, I came to Odisha, but I had missed the travelling and preaching. I think Srila Gour Govinda Maharaja was not so happy.

I had the opportunity to be with him several times, although they were always short visits. I couldn't get



a place to write the *Nāma-haṭṭa* program, so I went to Bhubaneswar. That was the best place to write. Srila Prabhupada wrote there, Gour Govinda Maharaja wrote there, I took some advice and inspiration, so I could be with him. That's how I was able to conceive of the *Nāma-haṭṭa*, and how to implement it in ISKCON.

Gour Govinda Maharaja was so humble. He built a guesthouse, a big building, and made a big room for the GBC, but he still stayed in the hut, in the *bhajana-kuṭīra*. He was always very simple. For any kind of philosophical issue we wanted to get some understanding about, references from different scriptures, we could go to Gour Govinda Maharaja as a resource. He could speak for hours on a single verse, extracting hidden meanings and presenting them with simple clarity and deep conviction.

Srila Gour Govinda Maharaja was always doing something Krishna conscious. Everyone used to take inspiration from his great qualities. He stuck to his services. He fulfilled all the orders that Srila Prabhupada gave him. Prabhupada told him to build a temple, to translate books, to preach... he fulfilled everything. His life is a life of success. Despite his seniority and exalted

position, he was always humble and approachable. He would sit with the devotees, listen to their problems, and offer guidance with fatherly love and care.

Gour Govinda Maharaja was always strict in his *sannyāsa* vows. He was a *grhastha* first, and then he took *sannyāsa* after having several children. He would speak very directly on the *grhastha āśrama*, and he encouraged people in renunciation. He lived a life of complete renunciation, always traveling, preaching, and engaging in Krishna's service. He ate little, slept little, and was constantly absorbed in remembering Krishna. He carried only a simple bag of books and his bead bag, thinking of himself as a humble servant of the servant.

I know Gour Govinda Maharaja wanted to see the whole world Krishna conscious. He wanted to see every town and village Krishna conscious and brought to the lotus feet of Lord Gauranga.

Some of the disciples of Gour Govinda Maharaja have taken the responsibility of being gurus, and they are doing well. But Srila Prabhupada said in a class in Mayapur in 1975 that we should have ten thousand

ācāryas, and then expand to a hundred thousand, and to a million, and from a million to ten million ācāryas. So I hope that more of Maharaja’s disciples will take up the responsibility of being gurus.

Your servant,

Jayapataka Swami

THREE BRIEF REFLECTIONS ON GOUR GOVINDA SWAMI MAHARAJA AND SANNYASA

Krishna Kshetra Swami Maharaja

Living and Breathing Sannyāsa

Srila Prabhupada awarded *sannyāsa* to several of his young men disciples, knowing that it was a great risk. It was a risk he accepted because he saw it as necessary to spread Lord Chaitanya’s movement. Over time, several of these young *sannyāsīs* found that they could not maintain their *sannyāsa* vows. A major consequence of their giving up the vows was a serious tarnishment of the *sannyāsa āśrama* in the eyes of the wider *Vaiṣṇava* society. Among those *sannyāsīs* who maintained their vows, Srila Gour Govinda Swami stands out in my mind as one who has restored the brilliance of the *āśrama* and as one for whom the life of a *sannyāsī* was as natural as breathing. Unlike others in this *āśrama*, for Maharaja, *sannyāsa* was not a matter of self-consciousness or a means of public recognition. Rather, it was simply a matter of taking the most comfortable form of dress in which to function well: Maharaja could most naturally function as a vigorous preacher and teacher of Krishna consciousness, following in the footsteps of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu by accepting *sannyāsa-veśa*.

Teaching Sannyāsa

In one lecture, Srila Gour Govinda Swami quoted Locana Das Thakur’s *Caitanya-maṅgala*, in which Mahaprabhu teaches Mother Sachi that the only true relationship a person can have is with Krishna. Because Sachi-mata was devastated by learning that her Son is about to leave home permanently and take shelter of the *sannyāsa āśrama*, Mahaprabhu tries to console her with devotional wisdom. The painful irony is that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu *is Himself* Lord Krishna, the one person with whom one can have a true relationship, and now He was leaving. Gour

Govinda Maharaja was certainly aware of this irony. He said, “Mahaprabhu is Krishna, but he never says, ‘I am Krishna.’ He always thinks of himself as a devotee of Krishna . . . He is a disguised incarnation, that is why he spoke this way to Sachi-mata.” Further quoting *Caitanya-maṅgala*, Maharaja explained that Mahaprabhu promised to fulfill the duty of a son to bring wealth for the family by bringing his mother *kṛṣṇa-prema*. I like to think of Gour Govinda Maharaja as being in a similar mood in his preaching — bringing *kṛṣṇa-prema* to the world, just as Mahaprabhu did by taking up the *sannyāsa* staff.

Serious Play

Srila Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja communicated a deep sense of what it means to follow Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s resolve to accept and embrace the austerity of *sannyāsa* when he would explain Mahaprabhu’s resolve as His way of “repaying the debt” that He, as Krishna, felt toward the Vraja *gopīs* in their selfless love for Krishna. As Krishna’s play — *līlā* — with the *gopīs* is profoundly serious in a way that no worldly play can be (even the “seriousness” of professional sports is no comparison), so Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s taking *sannyāsa* was the Lord’s seriously playful means of repaying Krishna’s debt. That seriousness is especially recognizable in the fact that countless people’s lives are transformed by having been in contact with a devotee such as Gour Govinda Maharaja, who seriously took up the order of *sannyāsa* in the spirit of assisting Mahaprabhu in His debt-repaying *līlā*. The wonder of this serious play is that there is an ever-expanding quantity of devotional debt being spread everywhere: Whoever accepts the instructions of *sannyāsa-śiromaṇi* Chaitanya Mahaprabhu thereby accepts to be ever indebted to *guru* and *gaurāṅga*. And the only way any of us can begin to repay this debt is to carry the message of Mahaprabhu to others, thereby putting *them* into debt.

GOOD FORTUNE ARISES

Niranjana Swami Maharaja

Although I’ve been eternally blessed to have been accepted by my beloved spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada,



as his disciple, I did not have the good fortune to sit at his lotus feet and to be directly instructed by him. It was not until 1993, when I met Gour Govinda Maharaja in a small motel room in East Hartford, Connecticut, USA, that I was able to realize what great fortune arises when one sits at the feet of a guru and receives transcendental instruction from him. I will never forget that day as long as I live. I’m convinced that Srila Prabhupada chose to speak to me through him. (Taken from *When Good Fortune Arises*)

JEWELS IN THE OCEAN

Partha Sarathi Das Goswami Maharaja

In January 1995, His Holiness Gour Govinda Maharaja embarked on his African tour. I knew Janeswar Prabhu for some years because he had spent time preaching in South Africa and had married an Indian lady from our congregation that I had been cultivating since 1978.

I felt some hesitation to meet Srila Gour Govinda Maharaja, but Janeswar Prabhu encouraged me and arranged a meeting. Gour Govinda Maharaja was staying

in the VIP visitors room at the Radha Radhanath temple in Durban. I entered his room one morning, and after offering my obeisances to Maharaja, we embraced. Maharaja sat on the bed and I on a chair, and we spoke about *bhakti*. The level of conversation was deep, and I could immediately understand that Gour Govinda Maharaja was not an ordinary *vaiṣṇava*; that his level of Krishna consciousness was a lot deeper than I’d been used to in my regular association. I felt happy that Gour Govinda Maharaja did most of the speaking. Unfortunately I did not carry a tape recorder and felt foolish for that. After that morning meeting we met a few more times and I decided to accompany him to the airport for his departure. I sat in the back seat with Maharaja, and Janeswar sat in the front.

On the journey, Maharaja quoted some verses in Sanskrit and English from Raghunath Das Goswami’s *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*. I had been memorizing those exact verses and I felt enlivened to hear a senior *vaiṣṇava* quote them. This increased my faith in Gour Govinda Maharaja and I regretted that I had not taken more of his association during his brief visit to South Africa. But more than that

I wished that I had really expressed myself to him. I was too shy and afraid to reveal my inner aspirations. We arrived at the airport two hours ahead of time, which was unusual for me. Gour Govinda Maharaja liked to arrive early and he sat in a dignified way with his walking stick in the waiting lounge. While waiting he told me that *bhakti* is like an ocean; we cannot find jewels on the surface. To get them we have to dive deeper.

Mercy and Contribution

Partha Sarathi Das Goswami: If any objective, pure-hearted *vaiṣṇava* hears about Gour Govinda Maharaja's life, his childhood activities, his searching for and finally meeting Srila Prabhupada, and then his later pastimes, surely they will come to the conclusion that, in the words of Srila Bhaktisiddanta Saraswati Thakura, he is a *jīvan mukta mahāpuruṣa*, a great personage who, although living in this world, is fully liberated from its influence.

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja's life's statements are as follows:

- 1) To maintain the integrity and purity of ISKCON.
- 2) To establish that everything needed to know in spiritual life is included in Srila Prabhupada's books.
- 3) To show that there is no need to go outside ISKCON for spiritual advancement.

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja also introduced a new mantra which is especially appropriate for *Kali-yuga*, "Tolerate, tolerate and cooperate." Before you can cooperate there has to be the spiritual strength to tolerate. This quality of tolerance is also the first characteristic of the nine stages of *bhāva*. As it is stated in *Cc. madhya* 23.18, *kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ ...*

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja's birth, *gr̥hastha* life and *sannyāsa* life give us a concrete, paradigmatic example of a liberated soul. It is important in our *vaiṣṇava* institution to have practical examples of disciples and followers of Srila Prabhupada who have actually attained perfection. I believe Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami is one of those examples.

How can we invoke the mercy of such a liberated soul? The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, ādi 1.20, tells us:

*granthera ārambhe kari 'maṇigalācaraṇa'
guru, vaiṣṇava, bhagavān, tinaṇa smaraṇa*

In the beginning of this narration, simply by remembering the spiritual master, the devotees of the Lord, and the Personality of Godhead, I have invoked their benedictions.

Association with Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami by reading his books and by praying to him can create a conduit or channel by which mercy can flow. The stronger the faith in Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja, the thicker the conduit becomes, the more mercy is bestowed. The via medium for mercy is faith. The increased faith you have in a superior *vaiṣṇava* will correspond to a higher degree of mercy that can be transmitted from that superior *vaiṣṇava* to others. This is why faith, *śraddhā*, is the very essence of spiritual advancement.

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja's contribution as a member of ISKCON and a leading disciple of Srila Prabhupada is wonderful. He successfully balanced a practice of extremely deep and realized *bhajana* with constant travelling and preaching. His enthusiastic preaching was based on a direct instruction he got from Srila Prabhupada that he should "preach to the preachers". The latter part of his life, after he took initiation, was inspired by the single thought of how to please his Guru Maharaja. To achieve this he successfully fulfilled three instructions given to him

VANDANĀ

यस्य गर्जनमात्रेण हताः कामादिजम्बुकाः ।
स सिंहो गौरगोविन्दस्वामी मां सर्वदावतु ॥

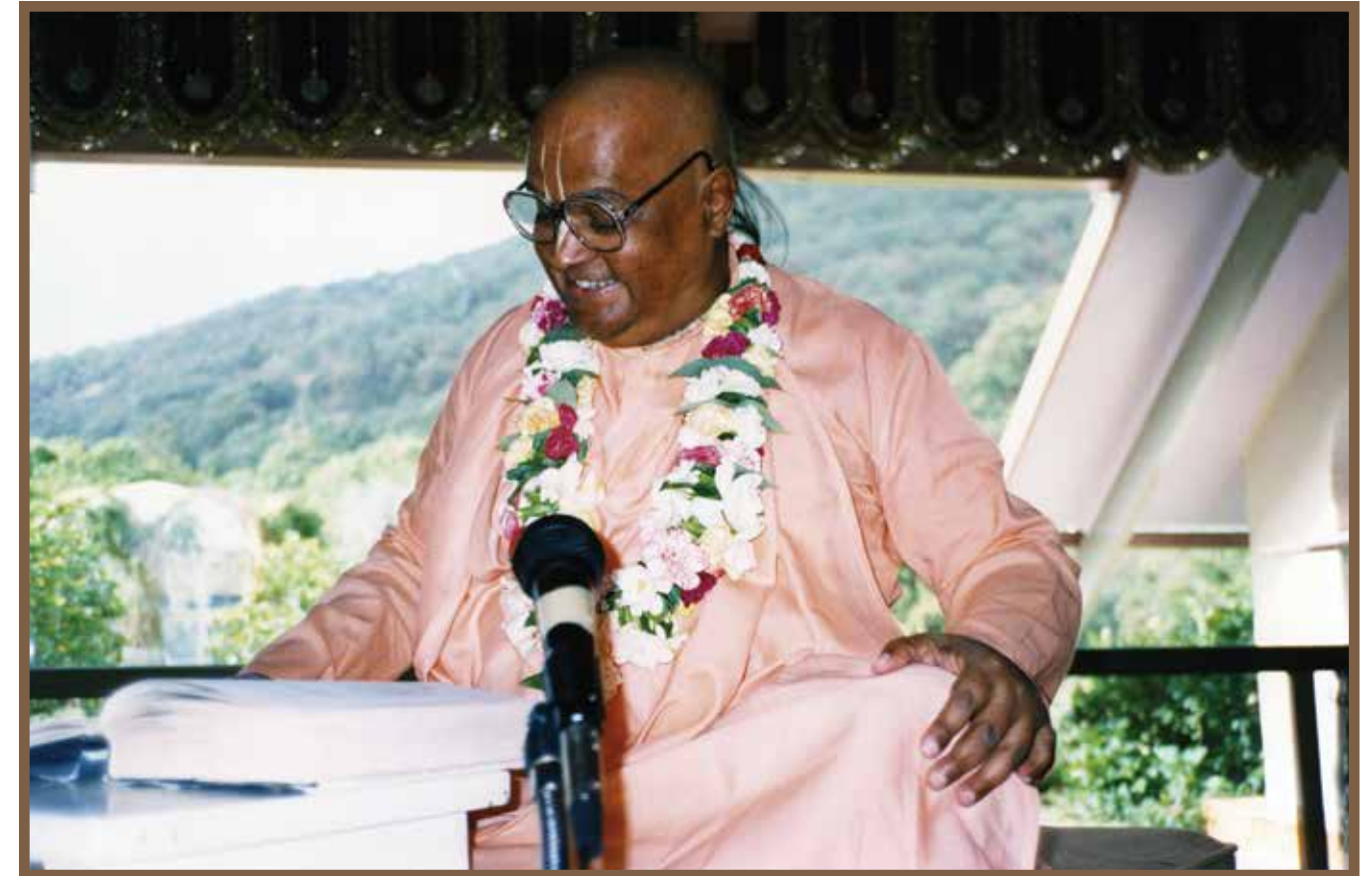
*yasya garjana-mātreṇa hatāḥ kāmādi-jambukāḥ
sa siṁho gaura-govinda-svāmī māṁ sarvadāvatu*

By his mere roaring, the various jackals viz. lust etc. are immediately slain. May that lion named Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami protect me always.

लाडनं ताडनं यस्य कृष्णप्रेमप्रदायकम् ।
स श्रीमद्गौरगोविन्दस्वामी दण्डेन शास्तु माम् ॥

*lāḍanaṁ tāḍanaṁ yasya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāyakam
sa śrīmad-gaura-govinda-svāmī daṇḍena śāstu mām*

His *lāḍanam* (affection) and his *tāḍanam* (chastisement) have the same effect of bestowing *kṛṣṇa-prema*. May that personality named Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami chastise me with his stick.



by Srila Prabhupada, i.e. to create a beautiful temple in Bhubaneswar, to translate, print and distribute books in the Odia language, and, finally, to travel all over the world and preach to the preachers.

In conclusion, Srila Prabhupada writes in his purport to *Cc. ādi* 17.1, "We take great pleasure in the transcendental behavior of our students." I am convinced that Srila Prabhupada has and is taking great pride in the transcendental behaviour of his beloved disciple, Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja. (Taken from *When Good Fortune Arises*)

PRE-EMINENT SANNYASI

Romapada Swami Maharaja

I want to express my gratitude to the disciples of Gour Govinda Maharaja for conducting events such as this, wherein an exalted *vaiṣṇava* such as their Guru Maharaja is being honored and memorialized for future generations.

My association with him was limited, mainly because my services and his services did not intersect so much. However, when visiting Bhubaneswar, the prominence of his austerities and translation work and his writings

were well-known by everyone and visible within the *vaiṣṇavas* of Bhubaneswar.

Amongst the disciples of Srila Prabhupada, I understood him to be a pre-eminent *pakka sannyāsī* and *sādhū*. That was the profile that he established, both by his conduct and his speech, and all of the *vaiṣṇavas* understood him in that way, whatever extent of association they had with him personally. I was one such person, and to this day my regard for him is superlative.

Yours in service to Srila Prabhupada,
Romapada Swami

THE EMBLEM OF SANNYASA LIFE

Sarva-drik Das Prabhu

Dear devotees, the greatly fortunate recipients of the mercy of Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

In keeping with the tenor of this auspicious publication, I am reflecting on the ideal *sannyāsa* life of my revered godbrother, Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja. Doing so inspires me to embrace the

mood of renunciation that is dear to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and our *sampradāya*.

Srila Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya composed a famous prayer, wherein he stated:

*vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga-
śikṣārtham ekaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śarīra-dhārī
kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye*

“Let me take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, who has descended in the form of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to teach us real knowledge, His devotional service and detachment from whatever does not foster Krishna consciousness. He has descended because He is an ocean of transcendental mercy. Let me surrender unto His lotus feet. (Cc. madhya 6.254)

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was the very emblem of *sannyāsa* life and He taught the same principles to all of His followers. Renunciation in *bhakti* is not for fakers and sense enjoyers and Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja showed the world a practical example of *sannyāsa*. His only purpose in life was to please the Lord.

Maharaja was not an idle *sannyāsī* that never stepped beyond the threshold of the *maṭha*. Even in his advanced age, afflicted with serious health challenges, he travelled throughout the world with great difficulty, delivering the message of Godhead, exactly as he heard it from the lotus mouth of Srila Prabhupada. Such dissertations have immense power to change the consciousness of conditioned souls and awaken in them the ultimate reality — *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.20.25) poetically describes such power as follows:

“My dear Lord, You are glorified by the selected verses uttered by great personalities. Such glorification of Your lotus feet is just like saffron particles. When the transcendental vibration from the mouths of great devotees carries the aroma of the saffron dust of Your lotus feet, the forgetful living entity gradually remembers his eternal relationship with You. Devotees thus gradually come to the right conclusion about the value of life. My dear Lord, I therefore do not need any other benediction but the opportunity to hear from the mouth of Your pure devotee.”

Srila Prabhupada comments in the purport:

“The transcendental vibration from the mouth of a pure devotee is so powerful that it can revive the living entity’s

memory of his eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This awakening voice comes through the mouth of a pure devotee.”

Sannyāsa means to renounce worldly life for the satisfaction of the Lord, “*sat-nyāsa*” and ultimately to give the most pleasing service to the Lord by preaching *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. Such a devotee is described in the pages of *Bhagavad-gītā* as “*anyaḥ priyataro bhuvī*” (18.69) the Lord’s most dear servant. Unfortunately, it has been seen that many, many big, big *sannyāsīs* gave up this world, “This world is false. Let me take *sannyāsa*.” But unfortunately, they could not stand in that position. Yours was not the *sannyāsa* of the confused *Māyāvādīns* who say “*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*,” I am brahman, the world is false *mithya*,” and yet go on to open hospitals, schools, eye camps and other mundane institutions for social welfare. Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja was not that sort of *sannyāsī*. He never deviated a millimeter from ideal *vaiṣṇava* behavior and objectives, even in his *gṛhastha* life, and his heart was full of mercy for fallen souls. His only business was to distribute those “mercy particles” far and wide, all over the world.

Fortunately, I was the beneficiary to some degree, on account of catching a few of those mercy particles in my ear. I will always remember those precious moments throughout my life and pray that the transcendental vibration will someday fully manifest in my heart, causing the destruction of the accumulation of many lifetimes of sins. Thus, by the mercy of a pure *vaiṣṇava*, there is hope that one day the Lord may accept me as His devotee.

With straw in my mouth, lying flat on the ground at his feet, I offer thousands of prostrate obeisances to His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja. May I always be the recipient of his divine mercy.

Hare Krishna!

Dāsānudāsa,

Sarva-drik Das ACBSP



The Living Mridangas of Sri Chaitanya

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

The following is an excerpt from a lecture given by Srila Saraswati Thakur on the occasion of sending his first sannyāsī preachers to the West.

The happy day has come when we are about to spread the message of our great master to distant corners of the earth. The spiritual service to which we are dedicated has now passed the bud stage and blown fully into a flower whose aroma we have to carry across the seas — with the same eagerness that characterized Sri Hanuman when he leapt over the wide ocean with the message of Sri Rama. This extension of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s spiritual gift to foreign countries is our humble offering at His Feet....

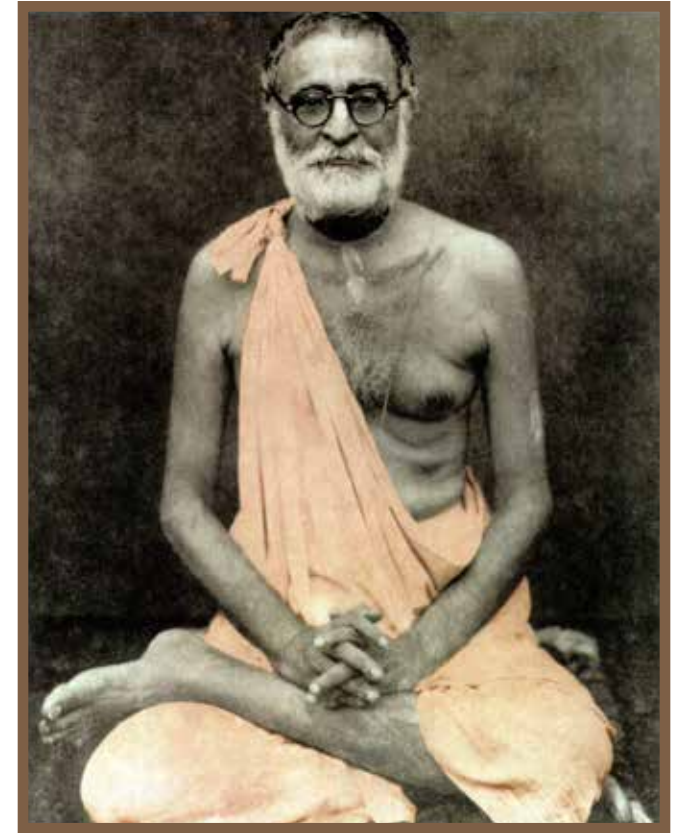
The words of instruction of Sri Gaurasundara are verily His beautiful body. The preachers of His word through the ages are His secondary limbs. The teaching of Sri Gaurasundara is His potent weapon. And the grace of Sri Hari Himself, established in the word of Sri Chaitanya, is His eternal associate. Therefore, for truly presenting Sri Gaurasundara, the Lord of the Gaudiyas, to the aliens, I am addressing a few words to the preachers who are about to proceed to countries beyond India.

We find the following great precepts (*mahāvākyas*) in the body of the teaching that has been vouchsafed to us by the supreme master of all masters:

To chant constantly the discourse of Hari, being extremely more humble than the blade of grass, being as forbearing as the tree, seeking no honor for oneself and offering due honor to all entities. This is the highest natural function of the unalloyed individual souls (*jīvas*).

The lotus feet of my Sri Gurudeva attracted me to his service by his manifestation as the living embodiment of these four great precepts. My friends will be in a position to attract all souls of the world to the foot stool of the real truth by purchasing the same unfailing method.

The crest jewel of the order of the *sannyāsīs* of the triple-staff, Srila Prabhodananda Saraswati Goswamipad, has

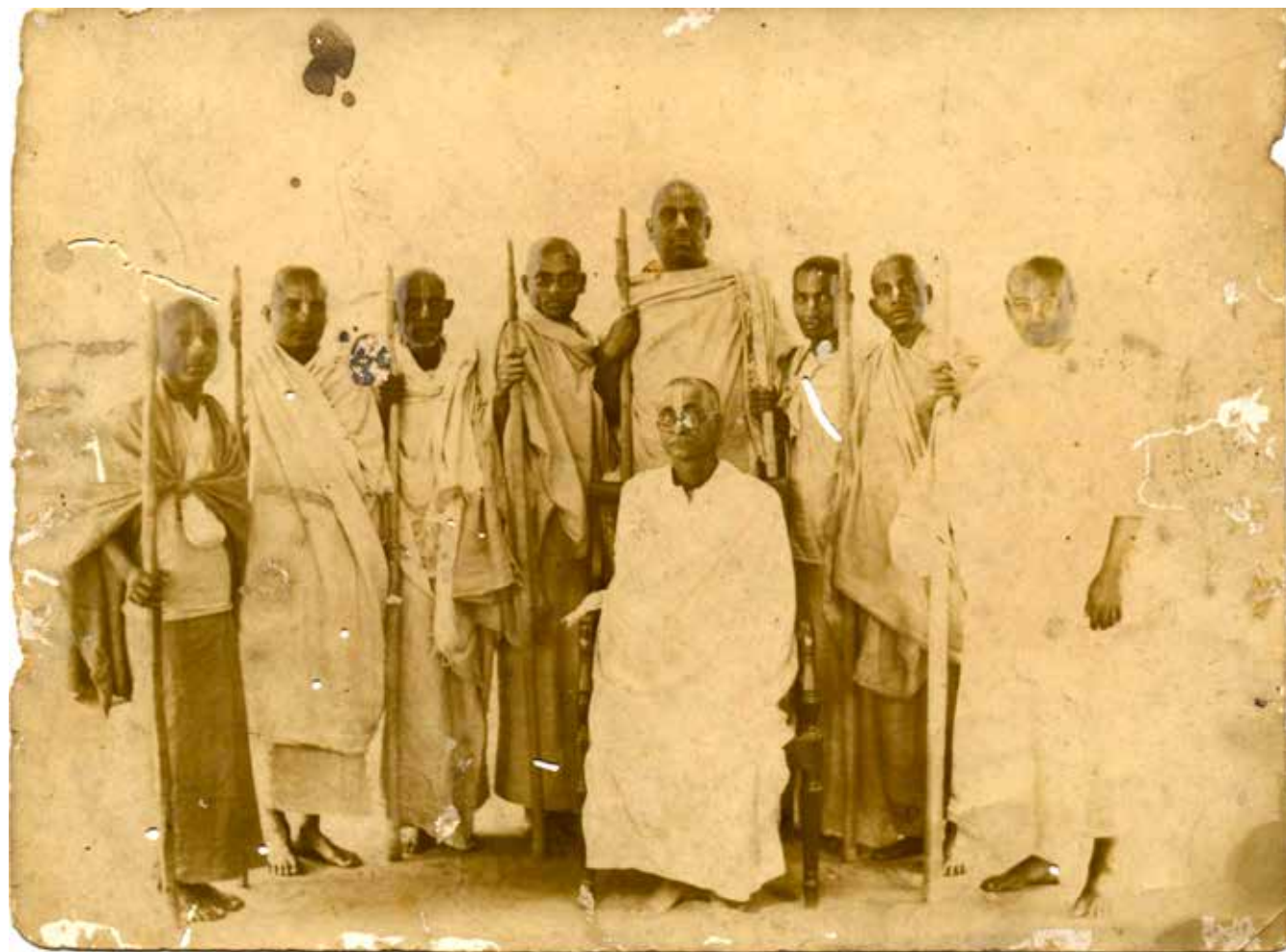


taught the same process to those who assume the triple staff of renunciation in the following words:

I say this by holding the straw between my teeth, by falling at your feet, and by uttering hundreds of the humblest entreaties. All ye good souls, by throwing off everything to a distance, should practice love to the feet of Sri Chaitanya, who is so surpassingly beautiful.

Following in the footsteps of all the predecessor devotees, I am making my submission to them to pursue the identical method of propaganda.

Sri Krishna Chaitanya Deva is the supreme teacher of all teachers of this world and the ideal possessor of intelligence that is the highest of all. It should be our only duty to constantly chant those words regarding the cleansing of the mirror of the heart of which He speaks in His eight precepts (*Śikṣāṣṭakam*). We are only the bearers of the transcendental word. We shall never in any way hesitate to offer every honor and facility, for which they are eligible, to all persons of this world. We must pray to all for the boon of an aptitude for the service of Krishna. We shall come across many persons in this world possessing an endless variety of characters disposed or hostile to the service of Krishna. But we should not slacken



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada and some of his sannyāsi disciples

in our loving service of the Lord of our hearts and should offer due honor to all persons.

We will have opportunities, as we approach different persons in all parts of the world with the vendor's bag of the discourse of Hari, to see a good many sights, to hear much, and to seek to derive much benefit from our experience. May we never forget that all entities of this world are essentially proteges of the lotus-feet of Sri Guru for helping the expansion of His service. May we always remember that they are excellent only if they are prepared to wait with the utmost eagerness on the particle of dust of the lotus feet of my Sri Guru, and that otherwise they are merely the mirage devised by the deluding potency for our ruin. I wish to remind those friends of mine who are proceeding to the west for preaching the words of Sri Chaitanya, of the two precepts of my master Sri Rupa:

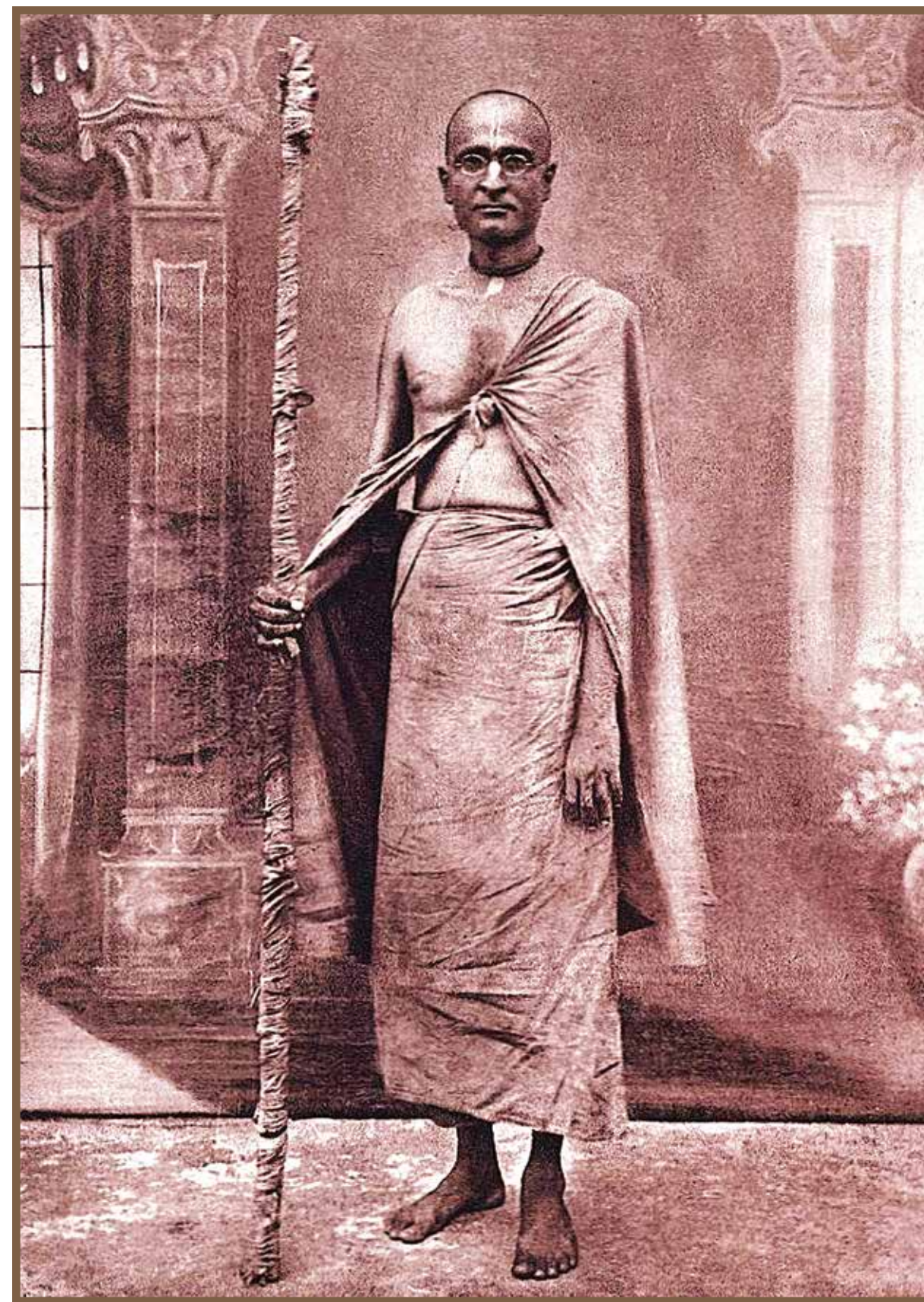
(1) The constant endeavor for cultivating relationship with Krishna of a person who, being free from all mundane affinity, enjoys the entities of this world, having due

regard to the propriety of each case, in pursuance of his purpose, is called the proper kind of renunciation.

(2) The abnegation, by persons desirous of liberation, of entities that have an affinity with Hari, in considering their mundane nature, is termed renunciation possessing little real value.

Those nations to whom you are going for the propagation of the chant of Hari are mounted on the summit of proficiency in all affairs of this world. They are practiced in the exercise of their rational judgment and are endowed with the quality of good manners. This should maintain our hope unshaken that they will prove to be the worthiest recipients of the heard transcendental voice, if we unlock to them the gates of the natural exhibition of abiding argument and enduring judgment. If we unpack our baggage of the genuine discourse of Hari by relying on the qualities of forbearance, it will certainly receive the garland of welcome from the hearts of nations gifted with keen intelligence.

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada in 1918 shortly after taking sannyāsa

50 Years of Sannyasa

We have not been actuated by any attempt of rivalry or hostility in undertaking this propaganda. This should always be borne in mind. We should call at the door of every seeker of the truth, bearing on our heads the baggage of the real truth to be offered to them. It is no business of ours to be elated or discouraged by the praise or neglect of any person. We must be constantly alive to the duty of enhancing the pleasure of our Master by serving Him with perfect sincerity.

We must not look at the world by being weighed down with the mentality that is oppressed with the sense of deficiency or otherwise, by the poverty or otherwise, of the display of worldly erudition, rank, etc., by any particular person. This is the state of forgetfulness of our real selves. All persons of this world are superior to us in every way as far as this world is concerned. Such material matters are not commodities that are to be coveted by us. We are merely beggars carrying the triple staff of renunciation and devoted to the chanting of the words of Sri Chaitanya. We have no more, nor any higher desirable object than the pleasure of serving *śrī-hari-guru-vaiṣṇavas*.

We are not the operators of the instruments. We are only the instruments. We must always bear this in mind. The triple *bhikṣus*, *tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs*, are the living *mṛdaṅga* drums of Sri Chaitanya. We must constantly give forth our music at the lotus feet of Sri Guru. We should practice the function of the peripatetic preacher, *parivrājakācārya*, of carrying aloft the victorious banner of the commands of the divine Sri Gaurasundar by constant submission to Sri Guru and the *vaiṣṇavas*, fixing our eye on the pole-star of the heard transcendental voice. We must always bear in mind that we have been initiated in the vow of peripatetic preacher for the sole purpose of promulgating the heart's desire of Sri Guru and Gauranga. If we are constantly inspired with the duty of discoursing about the truth under the guidance of Sri Guru, then no hankering after traveling, nor any veiled form of desire other than the chanting of *hari-nāma*, will ever strike any terror in our hearts.

The vowed service of the name, the transcendental abode, and the desire of Sri Gaurasundara, is our only eternal function. We are *bhikṣus* of the triple-staff. The in-gathering of the smallest alms, even such as are gathered by the bees, is our only means for serving the manifestation of the manifestive divine form of Sri Chaitanya Math all over the world. We are neither enjoyers nor abnegators of mundane entities. We recognize as our highest objective the desire for carrying with veneration the shoes of the order of the *paramahंसas*.



It will be our only duty to proclaim to all the people that complete reliance on the transcendental absolute truth is by far the highest form of freedom. That freedom is infinitely superior to the partial independent mastery over the distorted reflected entity in the shape of this mundane world. By holding the straw between our teeth in supplication, we shall carry aloft the banner of that real freedom to all persons. We should be constantly engaged in chanting the exhilarating name of Sri Hari by adopting as our fundamental enlightening principle that the highest path is the path of submission, endorsed by Sri Rupa, with the further exhortation to cherish the unwavering faith that He will always protect us.

— Lecture given in Madras, 18 March 1933. From Shri Chaitanya's Teachings, pages 383-384. Sree Gaudiya Math. Madras. 1989.



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Principles of Sannyasa

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava is a collection of the teachings of Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode compiled by Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinode, a prominent disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, and published in 1938. The book is in the form of a series of questions composed by the compiler, with answers extracted from Thakur Bhaktivinode's teachings. The following are some extracts from chapter 22.

Should a householder *ācārya* set the example of awarding *sannyāsa*?

When the devotee householders act as *ācārya* and award mantras and symbols of *sannyāsa*, great inauspiciousness is created for the recipient of the *sannyāsa*. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 4.2)

Can a householder award one *sannyāsa*?

One should take *sannyāsa* only from a renounced *vaiṣṇava*. Since a devotee householder has not relished the behavior of a renunciate, he should not give *sannyāsa* to anyone. (*Jaiva Dharma*, chapter 7)

How does one measure different levels of *vaiṣṇavas*?

The renunciate *vaiṣṇavas* should not think that they are more respectable than the *grhastha vaiṣṇavas*. One should know that the difference in respect among the *vaiṣṇavas* lies only between *uttama-adhikārī* and *madhyama-adhikārī*. Both *uttama-adhikārīs* and *madhyama-adhikārīs* are found among the *grhasthas*. This also applies to the renunciate *vaiṣṇavas*. The glories of the renunciate *vaiṣṇavas* are that they have given up the association of women, greed for money, and bodily pleasure. The *grhastha vaiṣṇavas* have special glories. Many of them work hard to earn money, and after serving Krishna, they serve *grhastha* and *sannyāsī vaiṣṇavas*. Whether one is a *grhastha* or a *sannyāsī*, the principal cause for respect is the attainment of devotional service. One should be respected as a *vaiṣṇava* according to one's advancement in devotional service. There is no other cause to distinguish the level of a *vaiṣṇava*. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 5.11)

Does one's position as a *vaiṣṇava* depend on *varṇāśrama*, high birth, opulence, scriptural knowledge, or beauty?

One who has devotion is a *vaiṣṇava*, whether he is *grhastha*, *sannyāsī*, rich, poor, learned, foolish, weak, or strong. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 10.2)

Should a devotee become a *sannyāsī* or a householder?

For a devotee to remain a householder or to become a *sannyāsī* is the same thing. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 11.12)

What is the position of a householder? Should one remain a householder forever?

The position of the householder is like a school for the living entity to learn and awaken the science of the self. (*Jaiva Dharma*, chapter 7)

Why is dry renunciation not pleasing to Krishna? How does Sri Hari bestow His mercy on one who favorably cultivates devotional service to Krishna and is devoid of material enjoyment, fruitive activities, and mental speculation?

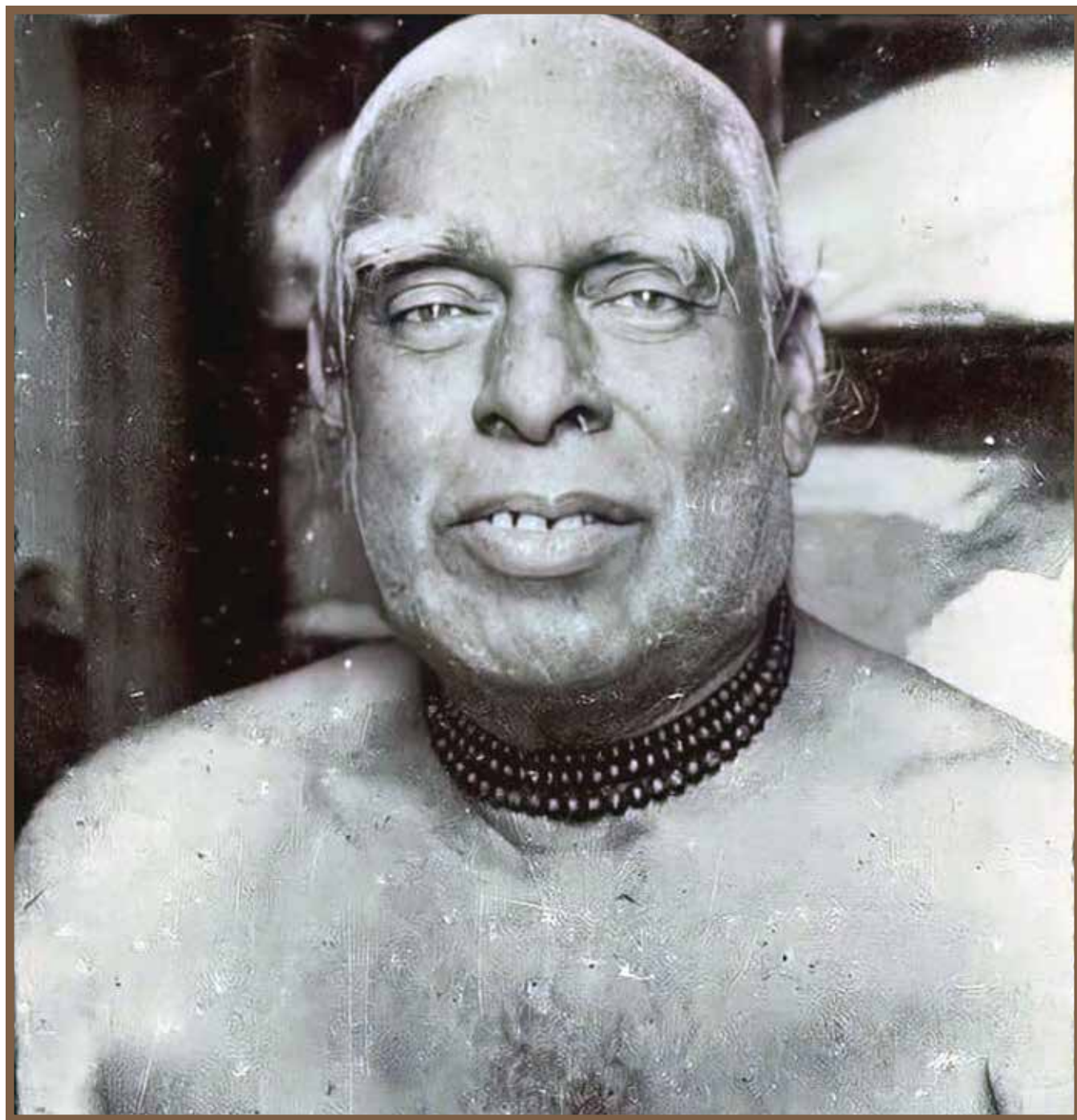
The role of *sannyāsa* is a sort of karma befitting an *āśrama* and is not pleasing to Krishna when it aims at liberation. *Sannyāsīs* receive the fruits of their karma and even if they are unmotivated, their karma ends in *ātma-mamatā*, self-pleasure. Pure devotees always serve Krishna by gratifying His senses. They forsake all attempts of karma and *jñāna*, being free from all desires except to serve Krishna. Krishna has fully destroyed the karma, desires and nescience of such devotees. (*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.54)

Is it proper to accept a living entity or a *sannyāsī* as Lord Narayan?

The *māyāvādī sannyāsīs* consider themselves Brahman and address each other as Narayan. It is the custom of the *smārtas* that if the Brahmins and the householders see a *sannyāsī*, they should offer him obeisances, thinking him to be Narayan. To stop this wrong belief, Sriman Mahaprabhu said that any living entity, including a *sannyāsī*, can never become Krishna, who is full of six opulences. The living entity is only a spiritual spark; therefore he is like a particle of the rays of the sun Krishna. It is improper to offer obeisances to a living entity because one considers him to be Narayan. (*Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta madhya* 18.112 to 116)

— *Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava*. English Translation by Bhumiapati Das. Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2002.





The last known photo taken of Srila Thakur Bhaktivinoda



Gour Govinda Maharaja's Acceptance of Sannyasa

From the book, "When Good Fortune Arises"

"Please Give Me Prema"

Throughout his life he wrote daily entries in his diary. For the most part these were in the form of letters to Gopal. Each entry would begin, *prabhu gopāla kṛpāru, koṇasi mate dinaṭi kotigalā*—"By the mercy of Prabhu Gopal, this day was spent thus..." The entries would end with a prayer to Gopal, "Please give me *prema-bhakti*, ecstatic love of God."

A sample, from 1st October 1973:

On account of the Durga-puja festival, school will be closed for some time. It will be reopened on Thursday, 18th October 1973. Today I saw a picture of Sri Chaitanya in Banambara's shop. In that picture I saw Mahaprabhu clutching the feet of the *prema-maya-yugala-mūrti*, the divine loving couple.

Sri Chaitanya-dev started chanting *divya-prema-nāma*, Krishna's divine ecstatic names. He rejected *śuṣka-jñāna*, dry knowledge. He preached *divya-nāma-prema*. He gave *nāma-prema* to all indiscriminately. *Prema-taraṅga*, the waves of *prema*, spread everywhere. Wherever he was going, *prema* was following. Even the very hard-hearted got a touch of that *prema* and their hearts were changed. This is the wonderful power of *prema*! By seeing that picture of Sri Chaitanya-dev, I got a *sparsa*, a touch of that *prema*. How can I get a picture of that Sri Chaitanya-dev? By seeing his picture I'll get a touch of *prema* and from *prema* I'll get wonderful inspiration and bliss. Then I can give bliss to others. Prabhu Gopal, please shower this mercy on me! Give me shelter at the *prema-kuṭir* of Sri Premanandaji! I must drown in that *divya-prema* and, giving *prema* to others, put out the fire in their hearts!

From 9th October 1973:

By the mercy of Prabhu Gopal, on the last two days our *Gītā* recitation program was finished here in my *iṣṭa-deva*'s [Gopal's] temple. Prabhu Sri Gopal, O you who are known



Paris in 1985 on his first tour outside of India

as *premānanda*, as *prema-maya-puruṣa*, as *vṛndāvana-bihārī*, and as *rādhā-kānta*! By your mercy, this *Gītā* program was finished with *ānanda* and *prema*. Prabhu, may your place be joyful! May *prema* and *ānanda*, love and bliss, be distributed! Make me your servitor! Give me an opportunity to distribute that *prema* and *ānanda*! Don't cheat me! Because you are *antaryāmī-nātha*, the Lord of my heart, you know my desire. And I am begging that from you! Please give me that *prema* and *ānanda*! Let me get it and let me distribute it!

The 1973 entries frequently mention Brajabandhu's desire to renounce family life. From 10th October:

Today there was a *mahotsava*, a great festival. *Prasādam* was distributed and *bāla-gopāla-līlā*, your childhood pastimes, were recited. Prabhu Gopal, for a long time I have had a desire to hear songs of *māna-bhañjana-līlā*, stories of how Krishna breaks the sulkiness of Srimati Radharani. *Prema-mayi* Radharani had developed *abhimāna*, loving pride, and Krishna was experiencing intense *viraha-kātara*, pangs of separation, because Radha would not permit him to see her. Therefore, there was a need for *māna-bhañjana*. Today, by the mercy of Prabhu, it happened. *Vṛndāvana-bihārī*, Krishna, became *rādhā-prema-bhikārī*, a beggar of Radha's love. My Gopal dressed up like a *sannyāsī* to beg *prema-dhana* from Radharani.



The simple mud hut in the village of Jagannathpur Odisha where Gour Govinda Maharaja was born and raised

O Prabhu Gopal, please make me a yogī, a *sannyāsī* like that! I don’t need anything, Prabhu. I am not asking you for material opulence, respect, glory, or anything else. You may give those things to my younger brother Kripasindhu. Let him maintain your family. Make me a *saṁsāra-vairāgī-yogī*, a renunciate of family life. Let me beg that *prema-dhana*, that wealth of love of Godhead! Let me distribute *prema* and *ānanda*! Let me serve you! Please shower this mercy on me, Prabhu! Please bless me with *prema-bhakti*, ecstatic love for you!¹

Leaving Home

By early 1974, Brajabandhu was feeling more and more dissatisfied with family life. He later recalled:

When I was teaching in school, it was just material education. But what to do? I had to teach that way or else my superior would dismiss me. I taught English, mathematics, and geography. In English class there was a poem titled “Blind Boy”. The boy in the poem was blind from birth, and people would speak to him about the sun — “Now it is morning. The sun has risen. Get up!” He heard them and wondered about the sun. “I don’t know that sun. I make my

own day and night; the sun makes their days and nights. When I am awake, it is my day. When I am asleep, that is my night.” While I taught this poem, I laughed to myself, “Why am I teaching this nonsense?” Something inside me objected. I decided, “No I shall not teach all this nonsense. Let me give up this job. I must teach real education that is spiritual. At last, I gave it up. I knew I had to take shelter of a pure devotee who could give me cent-percent Krishna.”²

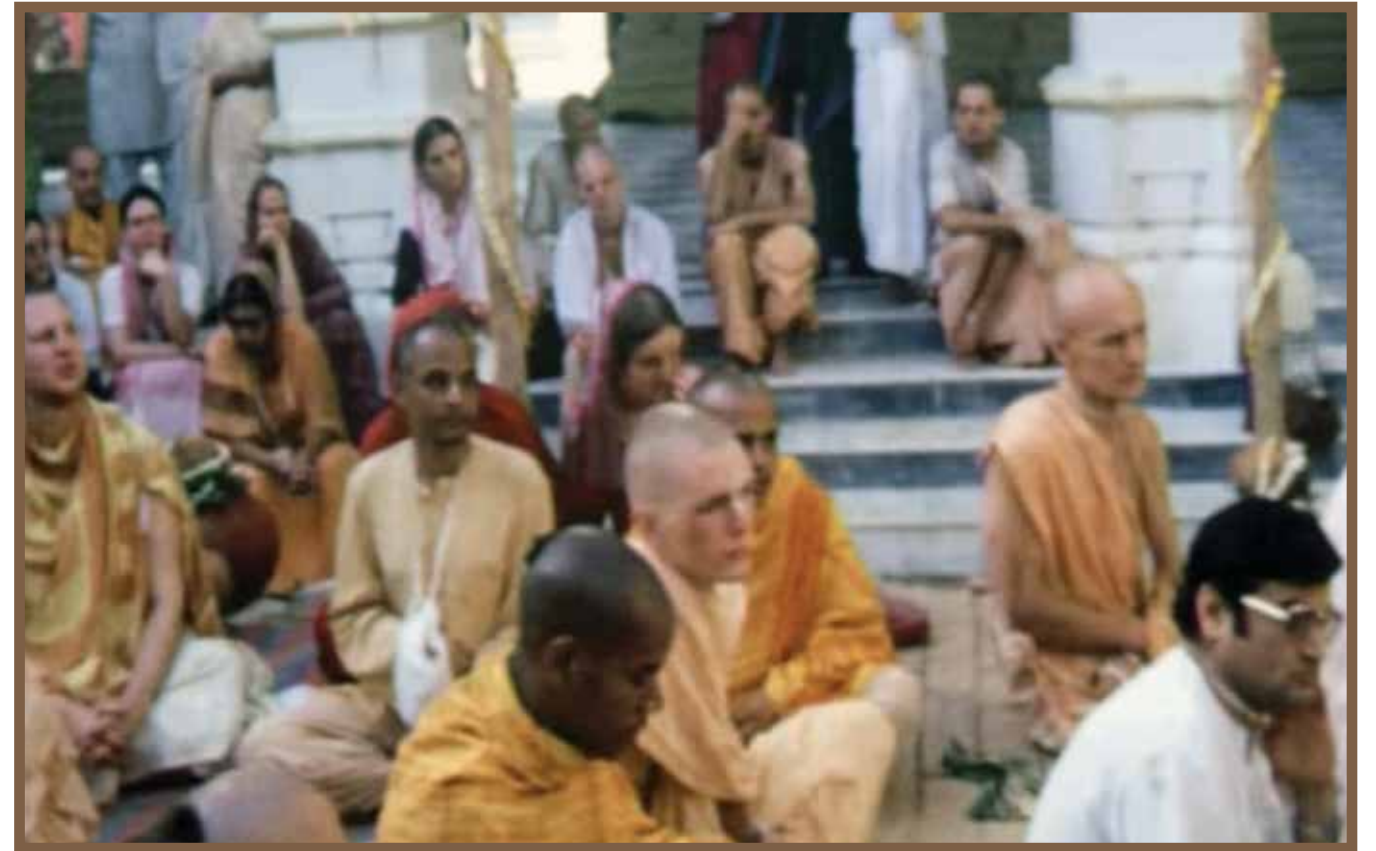
Out of respect for his mother, he spent twenty-two years in household life. At the age of forty-five, on 10th April 1974, at the end of the school year, he completed his routine teaching duties and then gave a letter to Prahlad Mahanty, the headmaster of the Bunbihari High School in Kujanga:

Sir,

Respectfully I beg to state that I am leaving Kujanga tomorrow on 11/4/74 (morning) to start my *divya-yātrā* for Guru Dham, Rishikesh. This is for your kind information and necessary action.

Yours faithfully,

Brajabandhu Manik, Assistant Master 10/4/74



Center with his hand in a beadbag. Photo at the Krishna Balaram Mandir in Vrindavan from the day he took sannyāsa

Leaving the school, he went home. He did not say anything to his family, but he packed his *Bhagavad-gītā*, two *gāmchas*, a pen, a pencil, and one notebook. That night, while his family was sleeping, he quietly got up at midnight and walked a half-mile away to a nearby temple known as Kakudia Math. He had decided to become a *sannyāsī*, a wandering mendicant, entrusting the care of his family to his eldest son, Vijay, aged nineteen.

His disciple Swayambhu Swami, then known as Subhas, was a student teacher at the same high school in Kujanga. He recalls: I heard that Gurudeva had left his family life and his position as a teacher and had gone to the Kakudia Math. The day after he left home I went to Kakudia Math to see him. When I arrived he was sitting and looking at a picture of Gopal and singing over and over again, “Gopal, Gopal, Gopal, Gopal, Gopal, Gopal, Gopal.” In the afternoon a group of teachers and students from the high school arrived to meet him. They were stunned by his sudden renunciation. They asked him, “Why have you left your job and your home?” Gurudeva then asked me to recite *Manabodha-cautiśa*, a song by the Odia *vaiṣṇava* Bhakta Charan Das:³

kaha-i mana āre mo bola kara
kaḷāśrī mukha bāre dekhiba cālare
kete dinaku mana bāndhuchu āṇṭa
ki ghenijibu tora chuṭile ghaṭare
khaṇḍi je khaṇḍi tora panjarā kāṭhi
khāuṇa thibe śvāna śṛgāla bāṇṭire
khaṭ palaṅke mana sejāi śou
khaḷa durgandha heba e tora dehure
galeṇi to saṅgaru jeteka jana
gaṇṭhire bānddhinele ke kete dhanare
guru gobinda nāma tuṇde nabolu
gāḍhe majjīṇa nitye dhana arjilure
gharaboli arjichu jete padārtha
ghaṭa chuṭile tote bolibe bhūtare
ghara gharāṇi deha kiḷāuthibe
gheni bandhu kuṭumba śuddha hoibere

I say to you, O mind: Obey my order!

Let us go and see the beautiful black-faced one [Lord Jagannath]!

For how long will you remain bound in material life?

At the end of your life, what will you take with you?



Above and right: Photos from the day he took sannyāsa

Piece by piece your ribs will be distributed
Amongst the dogs and jackals.
O mind, you are now sleeping comfortably on a nice mattress,
But after death your body will give off a terrible smell.
How many of your friends and family have already died?
How much of their wealth could they bind in a cloth to
take with them?
You have never uttered the names of guru and Govinda!
Always deeply absorbed in thinking how to gather wealth,
You are acquiring so many things like house and family!
But when your life is gone, all will cry, “Ghost!”
The ladies of the house will close up the doors.
And only after the recommended period of purification will
your relatives be considered freed from contamination.

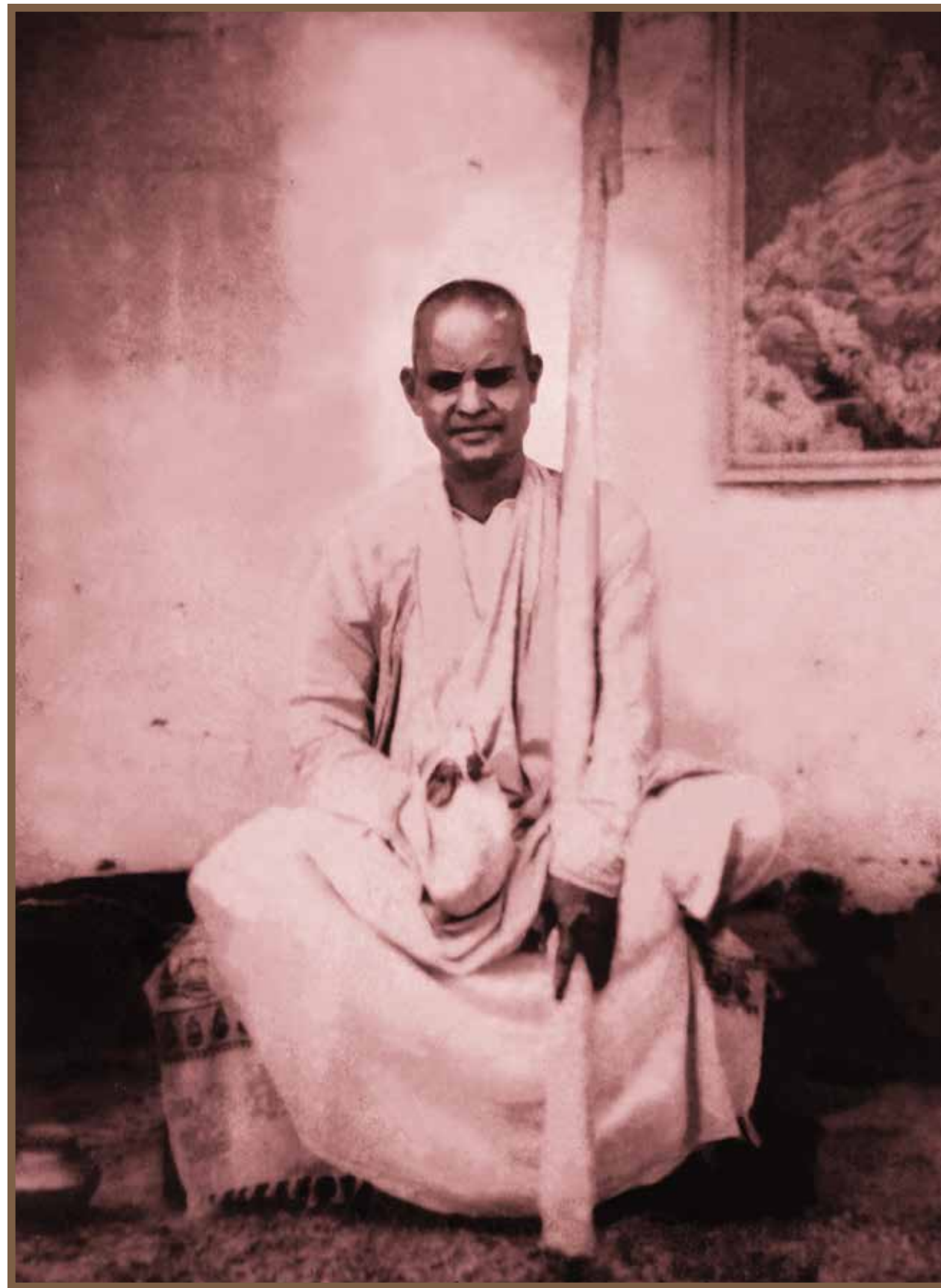
Gurudeva was listening intently to the song. When I came to the last line he fainted and fell back unconscious against me. Seeing that his jaw was clenched tightly shut, I took a piece of bamboo and pried open his mouth. When the teachers saw him faint in this way, they became convinced that Gurudeva was no ordinary person and that he was truly qualified to leave home and take to spiritual life. The students, however, still wanted him to return. Seeing the mood amongst the students, I told them, “Now he is unconscious. We can easily take him back to his home. Go and get a motor rickshaw.” As soon as they left I carried Gurudeva away where they could not find him. Later, we came back to the *maṭha*. That evening, Gurudeva’s wife Srimati Vasanti Devi came. Gurudeva had her sleep inside the room while he and I slept outside



on top of some coconut palm leaves. In the morning I pointed out to Gurudeva how there was an imprint on his body from the leaves. He said, “Yes, renounced life is like this.” His wife was unable to convince him to return, and he sent her back home that morning. He stayed there at Kakudia Math for five or six days, during which time he called for his younger brother Kripasindhu and asked him to take care of his family. Then he left Kakudia Math and walked the 14 kilometers to Gadeigiri to request Gopal’s permission to take *sannyāsa*.

Meeting Srila Prabhupada

Gour Govinda Swami: In Vrindavan there are many ashrams and many *vaiṣṇavas*. Four types of *vaiṣṇavas* are found there: followers of Ramanujacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Madhvacharya and Vishnuswami. I visited all of their ashrams. *Saṅkīrtana* and *pravacana*, class, was being given in each place. Many *apa-sampradāyas* are also present in Vrindavan. I visited every one of them and spent one night at each place to see what they were like. Still I was not satisfied. My heart was not attracted.



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Maharaja shortly after taking sannyāsa



Gour Govinda Maharaja's shoes from when he left home

One day I was going by the road in Raman-reti and I saw a sign, “International Society for Krishna consciousness, Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada”. They had just begun construction. They were digging the foundation. All that was there at the time were some mud huts. Prabhupada’s room was the only proper house.

I thought, “Let me enter and see what this is.” I went into the ashram and saw many Western devotees with shaven head, *śikhā*, *tilaka*, and chanting beads. One of them gave me a *Back to Godhead* magazine. I turned the pages and saw, “Oh, it is here: *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the things I was searching for, are here.” Then I became inquisitive to meet the Founder-Acharya, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Fortunately, he was there.

One of the devotees said, “You first go and meet his secretary and talk to him. He will fix an appointment with Prabhupada for you.” Brahmananda Swami was Prabhupada’s secretary. I went there and offered him my obeisances, “Swami, *daṇḍavats!* I want to meet His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. Will you please make an appointment for me?”

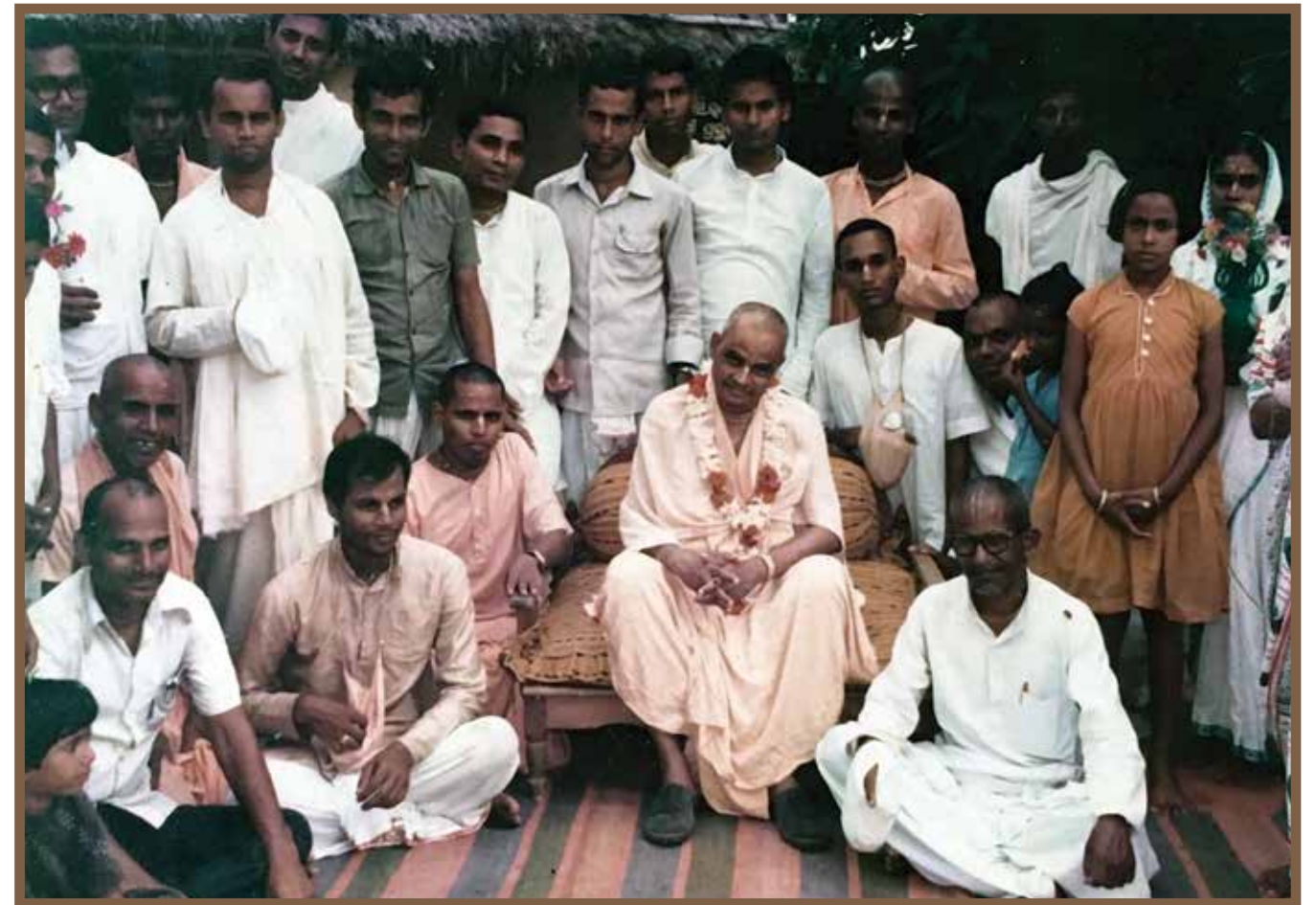
It was noon time. Prabhupada had already taken his noon meal and was sitting in a chair alone in his room. Brahmananda asked, “Why do you want to meet him?”

“I want to meet such a great *paramahansa-sādhū*, offer obeisances, and get his blessings. Nothing else. Please help me.”

My heart was crying. *Paramātmā* is in every heart, so he inspired Brahmananda Swami. He didn’t refuse. He went into the room and told Prabhupada I was there.

I was looking like a *sādhū*, but I was not a *sādhū*. I had only put on saffron cloth. Brahmananda Swami said, “One *sādhū* has come. He wants to meet you.” Immediately Prabhupada said, “Yes, call him in.” This is how *paramātmā* helps. He knows your heart. If you are really crying in your heart, then he will definitely help you.

I went inside. No one else was there. Prabhupada was sitting in a chair. I offered my obeisances. He gazed at me with his *sādhū-dṛṣṭi*, his merciful glance. *Sādhū* will see you. It is not that you can see a *sādhū*. This is a misconception. Everyone wants to see a *sādhū*, but how can you see a *sādhū*? Do you have the vision to see a *sādhū*? You are a conditioned soul. Your senses are defective. Can you see a



sādhū with your defective vision? Can you see Krishna with defective vision? No. This is a misconception. Everyone thinks, “I am the seer. I’ll see.” But you are not a seer. *Sādhū* is the seer. Krishna is the seer. You are to be seen.

He cast his merciful glance on me. He could understand everything because he has such vision. He understood me very well. Then he asked me a few questions, “Who are you? What is your name? Where are you from?” I was looking like a *sādhū*, so he asked, “Have you taken *sannyāsa*?”

I said, “No.”

Immediately, he said, “I’ll give you *sannyāsa*.” I had not asked for that. How is it that he said that? Because he is the manifestation of *paramātmā*. He knows the heart. This is my practical experience. Immediately I surrendered to him.

Notes

1 *Gurudeva Siksamṛta*, issue 3.4, pp. 29-30.

2 This and subsequent passages from Gour Govinda Swami’s diaries are all translations from Odia.

3 “*Manabodha*” means “instructions to the mind”. “*Cautiśa*” refers to a poem with special phonetic rules. Notice the arrangement of the first syllables of each line of this initial portion of the poem, *ka, kha, ga, gha*, which continues to cover, in order, all the consonants in the Odia alphabet.

Gour Govinda Maharaja's Diary on Taking Sannyasa

13th April 1975 to 27th April 1975

By the mercy of Prabhu Gopal, these days were spent in Hyderabad and Sri Vrindavan Dham. On 15 April 1975, the journey began to attend the festival in Vrindavan. This servant arrived in Vrindavan on 17 April 1975.

On 19 April 1975, on the auspicious occasion of *Rāmanavamī*, the deity installation ceremony took place at the Krishna Balaram Temple in Raman Reti, Vrindavan — a



temple established by Sri Guru Maharaja. The festival continued for a week.

This servant traveled to Vrindavan primarily to accept *sannyāsa* initiation, following the instruction of Sri Guru. On Wednesday, 23 April 1975, this servant received *sannyāsa* initiation, holding the *tridaṇḍa* and offering body, mind, words, and self — everything — to Bhagavan Sri Krishna, to whom all these rightfully belong.

May Prabhu Bhagavan Sri Krishna bestow transcendental knowledge, devotion, and spiritual strength. May this servant's entire life be dedicated to his divine service, immersed in transcendental love and bliss. Yet, at times, I feel as though I have lost the transcendental mood, love, and joy for you, O Prabhu! Please bestow upon this servant unwavering transcendental love, bliss, and the eternal mood of servitude.

With the acceptance of *sannyāsa*, this servant was given the name Gour Govinda Dasa Goswami. (Translation by Prabhupada Priya Sevak Das)



Srila Gurudeva's Sannyasa

By Kalakantha Das

From chapter 4 of Śrīla Goura
Govinda Swāmī Līlā-carita

śrī-guru carita ai bhakti rasāmṛta
varṇanā kariba āmi kari daṇḍavata (1)

savāra caraṇe mora binamra praṇati
krupākari deo more śrī guru bhakti (2)

Offering my *daṇḍavats*, I shall now proceed with the recital of Gurudeva's (Gour Govinda Swami's) biographical portrait which is bursting with nectarine *bhakti-rasa*. I also tender my most humble *praṇams* to the feet of all you *vaiṣṇavas*, praying that you will all kindly bless me so I may attain some devotional sentiments for Sri Guru.

samsāra visayāsakti bāḍe dinu dina
visayānale praveśiyā nā hoya bhajana (3)

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja



My fond regard for the objects of the senses escalates day by day and my entrance into the blazing fire of sensual pleasures has bereft me of all *bhajan*.

gurudeva krusnera hoya ati nija jana
jāhāra krupāte haya samsāra mocana (4)

nadī srote nābayena jīvera āśraya
samsāra srotera nāva gurudeva haya (5)

Srila Gurudeva is Krishna's intimate companion, and by his grace, we may surely cross beyond this ocean of *samsāra*. Just as a boat provides relief to a *jīva* swept away in a flowing river, similarly, our Srila Gurudeva is like a boat (delivering us who are drowning) in this river-like *samsāra*.

guru pādapadme āche druda bhaktijāra
anāyāse pārahaya samsāra sāgara (6)

Those who have secured an unshakable devotion for the lotus-like feet of the guru can very easily cross over this ocean of material existence.

āmāra guru haya sei parama premāswada
viśve prasidha nāma tānka śrī gaura-govinda (7)

50 Years of Sannyasa

Our guru relishes *parama-prema* (the height of *prema*) and is therefore famous throughout the world by the name of Sri Gour Govinda.

gurudevāra sannyāsa līlā ati camatkāra
suna sabe citta diyā na hoi adhira (8.)

Gurudeva's *sannyāsa-līlā* is truly astonishing. I entreat you all to now patiently hear of this pastime with one-pointed attention.

bhubaneśwar nāchāḍite mane-cintā hoya
bhāgavat upadeśe chāḍite jāya (9)

mane cinten ehi sava krushnara āśīsa
prabhupāde ehi krame māgiba sannyāsa (10)

Gurudeva did not wish to abandon Bhubaneswar, but eventually acquiesced to follow Bhagavat Das's directions and left whilst consigning all the events (that transpired during this brief episode) to the effects of Krishna's direct blessings. He also realised how the occasion lent itself most favourably for him to beg Srila Prabhupada for *sannyāsa*.

sannyāsī haite tabu ekāntare bāsa
krusnere seviba māni guru upadeśa (11)



*atacinti calena tabu chāḍi bhubaneśwar
prabhupādera daraśanārthe hayān āgabhara (12)*

*bhāgavat gurudeva nija sange nile
due mili ekahoyān hāydrābād cale (13)*

“If only I were a *sannyāsī*” (thought Gurudeva) “then I could live here all alone and serve Krishna according to my guru’s mandates (without having to defer to another’s dictates.)” Reflecting thus, he left Bhubaneswar, but despite this, he still felt very enthusiastic at heart, because he knew that he could now have Srila Prabhupada’s darshan. And so it came to pass that Gurudeva and Bhagavat Das travelled together to Hyderabad.

*seikāle hāydrābāde śrīla prabhupāda
bhaktaṅgaṇa sange karena bhakti-rasa swāda (14)*

*keteka sannyāsī āra kichu brahmacārī
prabhupāde beḍī āswāde bhakti-rasa-bāri (15)*

At that time in Hyderabad, Srila Prabhupada was relishing *bhakti-rasa* whilst surrounded by a few of his *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* who all sat around him and together they all savoured *bhakti-rasa-bāri* (the flow of *bhakti-rasa*.)

*seikāle gurudeva haile upastitha
binamra praṇati āra namra daṇḍavat (16)*

*gurudeve prabhupāda pāśe basāiyā
kuśala jignāsā karena krupā bitariyā (17)*

*prabhupāde nivedile āpani antara
je kārane chāḍi āile śrī bhubaneśwar (18)*

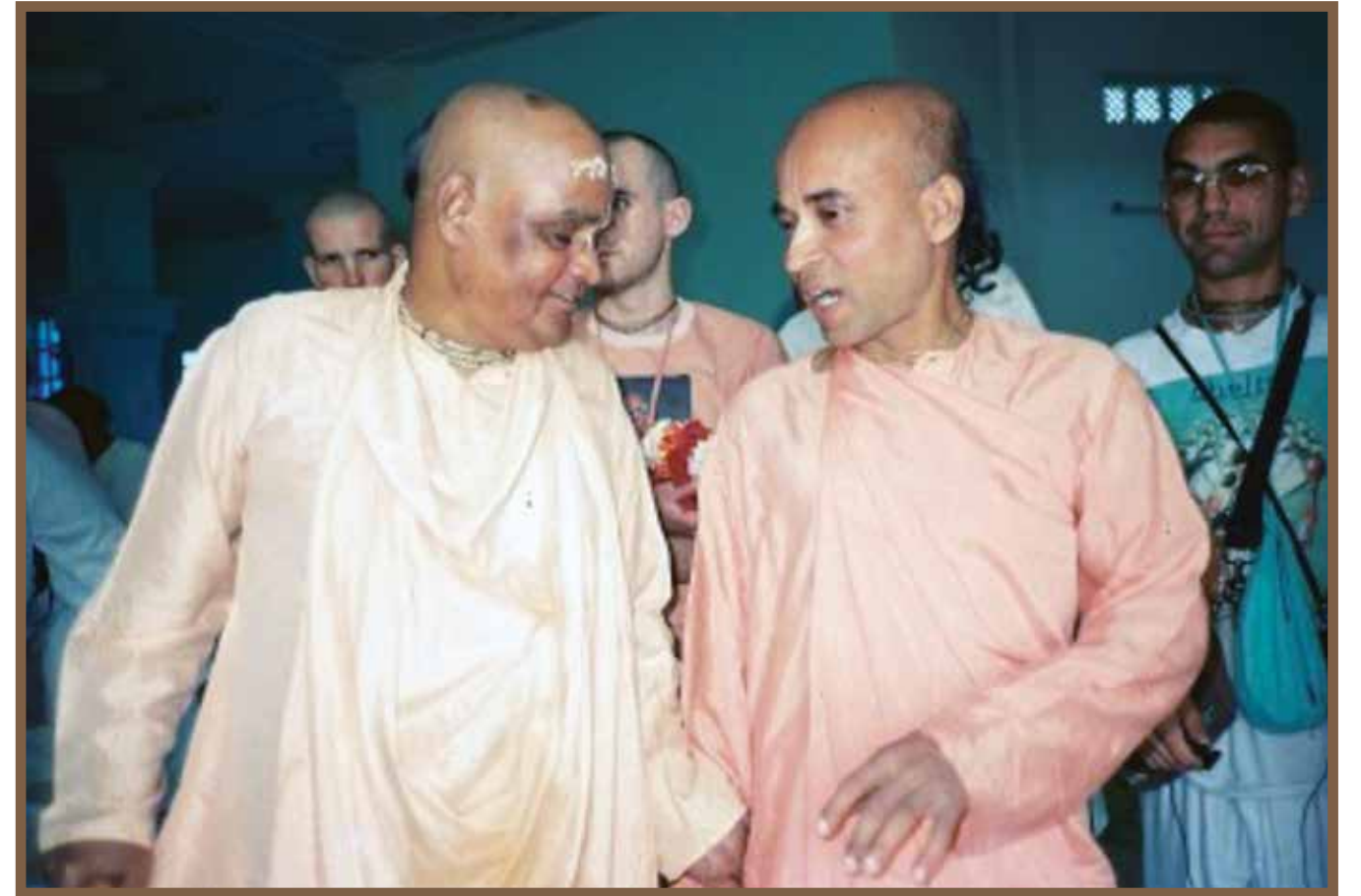
It was then that Gurudeva (entered into the presence of Srila Prabhupada) and after humbly offering his *praṇāms* and *daṇḍavats*, he sat down beside Srila Prabhupada. Bestowing his mercy upon him, Srila Prabhupada first asked of his well-being, and then he began to question him as to why he had left Sri Bhubaneswar.

*āmi brahmacārī boli bhāgavat dās
bhubaneśware sevā karite nāhin dile bās (19)*

*thakite seikhāne āmi karila upāya
bhāgavat prabhu more dekhāila bhaya (20)*

*āmi balilu eikhāne thākite habe
guru ājnā bhangi kari tumi kena jābe (21)*

*tumi jadi ichākara jāa tabe tumi
prabhupāda baliāchen ekhāne thākiba āmi (22)*



With Subhaga Maharaja in Bhubaneswar in the early 90’s

*kichu nā śuniyā āmāra bhāgavat dāsa
āmāra dhariyā āile diyā upadeśa (23)*

*navāgata brahmacārīra nāhin ekānta vāsa
suyoga pāyā māyā tāre karithāe grāsa (24)*

(Gurudeva said:) “Considering that I am a *brahmacārī*, Bhagavat Das did not allow me (to remain alone) and do my *sevā* at Bhubaneswar, and even although I was deliberating on the means to stay there, Bhagavat Prabhu made me feel apprehensive. I told him that we have to stay here.” “I also said to him” (continued Gurudeva) “why do you want to discard our guru’s orders and leave? If you wish to go, then you may do so, but Prabhupada has given me this command, therefore, I will remain here. But Bhagavat Das refused to listen to a word I said, and brought me here instead, insisting that a *navagata-brahmacārī* (a novice monk) should never remain alone, as *māyā* would take this opportunity to destroy me.”

*prabhupādera caraṇe kaile dainya nivedana
krupākari sannyāsa diyā purnakari mana (25)*

*āmi jadi sannyāsī haite jāi bhubaneśwar
kabhunā phirite āmi chāḍi bhubaneśwar (26)*

Gurudeva then made a humble petition at Srila Prabhupada’s feet saying: “Be merciful. Fulfil my heart’s desire to take *sannyāsa*. If I could return to Bhubaneswar as a *sannyāsī*, then I would never have to leave there again.”

*āmi tomake sannyāsa diba taba ei vani
pratama darasane tomara taha āmi jani (27)*

*taba śrīcarane ebe sei abhilasa
krupakari jogyakara more diyā sannyāsa (28)*

*sannyasi hayan āmi thaki bhubaneśware
kaya manovakye āmi sebiba tomare (29)*

“During our first darshan” (said Gurudeva) “I know that you said you would give me *sannyāsa*. Now I am praying at your lotus-feet for you to fulfil this promise. Kindly give me *sannyāsa* and I will remain in Bhubaneswar as a *sannyāsī* and serve you with my body, mind and words.”

*esaba suniya tabu śrīla prabhupāda
smitahasi balena suna gaura govinda (30)*



Left to right; back row: Shastivara Das, unknown Odia Brahmacari, Dandi Maharaja, Braja Kishore, Chaitanya Simha Das then his wife Racitambara Dasi with their daughter Jaya Radhika in between them, then Moksha Lakshmi Dasi. Middle seated: Bhagavata Das, Gour Govinda Maharaja. Front: Vanamali Das, unknown Odia devotee, Abhaya one of Gour Govinda Maharaja’s *pūrva-āśrama* sons, unknown Bengali Brahmacari.

*kichudina pare āmi jaba vrundavana
tumi jadi ichākara āsa seisthāna (31)*

*etaka baliyā calena prasāda sevite
sabe uthi calena tabu tāhānra sahite (32)*

Having listened to Gurudeva’s request, Srila Prabhupada simply smiled and said: “listen, O Gour Govinda, in a few days’t time I will go to Vrindavan, and if you so desire, you may come there too.” After saying this, Prabhupada left to take *prasādam*, and everyone accompanied Prabhupada (to honor *prasādam* too.)

*kichudina ante āmāra śrīla gurudeva
vrundāvana jātrā kaile smari prabhupāda (33)*

*śrī-rāma navamī hailā ante kichudina
seidhāme hailā jati-dīksā anuṣṭhāna (34)*

After a few days, our Srila Gurudeva himself left for Vrindavan, and throughout the journey he was thinking of Prabhupada. Some days later it was *śrī-rāma-navamī* (Lord

Rama’s blessed appearance day) the very day on which he was destined to take *jati-dīksā* (*sannyāsa dīksā*) in the *dhāma*.

*dīksā jagna sthāne diśe duiṭi āsana
duigoti danda āra duiṭi vasana (35)*

*jāṇe sarve jane habe jati dandadhārī
purātana bhakta sehi nāma tripurārī (36)*

*cinte sabe āra kona bhāgyavāna jana
āja dine sannyāsa dharma karibe grahana (37)*

In the sacrificial area where the *dīksā* was to take place, there were seen to be two *āsanas*, and two *daṇḍas*, as well as two sets of cloth. But as far as everyone was aware, only one person had been appointed to take *sannyāsa* that day, namely Tripurari, who was a long-serving devotee. Thus, everyone now began to wonder just who was the other fortunate being who was to take to the *sannyāsa dharma* that day?

*jagna sthāne prabhupāda hayān upasthita
ucakaṇṭe balena tabu suna āmāra bhakta (38)*

*āja je sannyāsa dīksā karibe grahaṇa
sighra āsi paridhāna karihe basana (39)*

Then Srila Prabhupada announced from his sitting place at the sacrificial fire pit: “Now please listen. Those who will take *sannyāsa dīksā* should come forward and put on their *sannyāsī*-robes.”

*śuni āise tripurārī āra gurudeva
dekhi ācambita haile anyabhakta sava (40)*

*kata bhakta mane cinte dekhi gurudeve
nava brahmācārī ei keno sannyāsī habe (41)*

*bāhya druste dekhe tāra nava brahmācārī
prabhupādera krupāte haila jati-daṇḍa-dhārī (42)*

In response to Prabhupada’s announcement, Tripurari and Gurudeva stood up. Witnessing this all the devotees were astounded. Some in the gathering, reckoning Gurudeva to be a mere novice-*brahmācārī*, wondered why he had been appointed to receive *sannyāsa*. Although from the external point of view he was a *nava-brahmācārī*, yet now, by Prabhupada’s grace, he was indeed eligible to be a *yati-daṇḍa dhari*’ (a *yati*, or *sannyāsī*, bearing a *daṇḍa*.)

*gaura govinda dās haila gaura govinda swāmī
purvanāma rākhi chāḍena sannyāsī daśa nāmī (43)*

*araṇya parvata bhāratī tīrtha giri purī
astottara sata nāme sannyāsī daṇḍadhārī (44)*

*e savāra nāma madhye āmāra guru-naya
seilāgi astottara sata balanā na jāya (45)*

After receiving *dīksā* you became known (says the poet) as Gour Govinda Swami, keeping your previous name and replacing the “Das” with Swami. Although it is traditional to bestow upon a *sannyāsī* a title chosen from the “*aṣṭottara*” (108) titles, such as: *araṇya*, *parvata*, *bhāratī*, *tīrtha*, *giri*, *purī* etc. yet no such accolades were given to our guru, and thus we do not say “*aṣṭottara*” when mentioning his name.

*mahāprabhura sannyāse jena keśava bhāratī
purvanāma rākhi kaile mahāprabhura kīrtti (46)*

*gurudevāra sannyāse tabu śrīla prabhupāda
dāsa sthāne kaila swāmī gour-govinda (47)*

*sannyāsī hayān sehu āile bhubaneśwar
krushna-bhakti dharma niṣṭā karile pracāra (48)*

Just as when Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa* from Keshava Bharati, he kept his former name by which he is renowned. Similarly, Prabhupada kept Gurudeva’s former name (Gour Govinda) only changing the “Das” to “Swami.”

He returned to Bhubaneswar, as a *sannyāsī*, and spread the word of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-dharma-niṣṭhā* (of remaining steadfast in one’s devotion to Krishna.)

(Translator’s note: Gaurāṅga’s former name was “Sri Krishna” in his previous *avatāra*. Keshava Bharati kept the name of “Sri Krishna” and added the new name of “Chaitanya” to his previous name to create the new name of “Sri Krishna Chaitanya.”)

*sannyāsa bruttānta ehi samkṣipta varṇaṇa
śrī-guru krupāte tāhā hailā samāpana (49)*

*sei guru-pāda padme rahu mora āśa
gurudevāra carita kahe kalakaṇṭha dās (50)*

Thus I conclude this brief description of your *sannyāsa-līlā*, and it is surely the guru’s mercy alone that allows me to write of these matters at all. With all my hopes and aspirations reposed at the lotus-feet of guru, Kalakanta Das narrates the biography of Gurudeva.

— *Srila Gour Govinda Swami Lila Charita*. By Kalakantha Das. English translation by Jagannath Mishra Das. Published by the author. Bhubaneswar. 2008. Odia.





Sri Krishna-kathanrita
Bindu

Free Subscription

- **Fortnightly email mini-magazine**
- **No charge. This is a free service.**
- **No politics, mundane solicitations, or institution promotion or bashing, only pure *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.**
- **Articles from our previous *ācāryas* as well as new translations, research findings and contemporary articles.**
- **Sign up at www.gopaljiu.org**



Krishna the Sannyasi Beggar

From *Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu* issue 25
By *Srila Govinda Das*

Govinda Das is considered the greatest poet of Brajabuli language and one of the great poets of Bengal. He appeared in Srikhanda, Burdwan District, probably in the third decade of the sixteenth century. He is the younger brother of Ramachandra Kaviraj, the close friend of Srila Narottam Das Thakur, rāmacandra-saṅga māge narottama-dāsa — “Narottam prays that he may have the association of Ramachandra.” (Prārthanā song 40). Like his elder brother Ramachandra, Govinda Das also accepted initiation and shelter at the lotus feet of Srinivas Acharya.

Although Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He relishes being subordinate to His devotees. Srimati Radharani is the topmost devotee of the Lord. Sometimes in Her loving dealings with Krishna She manifests transcendental anger toward Krishna and refuses to see Him. Krishna relishes Radharani’s anger and becomes overwhelmed with ecstasy. Krishna has to devise some method to break Radharani’s loving sulkiness, and this pastime is known as māna-bhañjana-līlā, the pastime of breaking Srimati Radharani’s anger. Regarding such pastimes, Srila Prabhupada has described:

Krishna wants to be controlled by Yasodamayi. Krishna wants to be defeated by His friends. Krishna wants to be refused Radharani’s darśana. [When] Radharani is angry, She refuses [to allow Krishna to see Her]. She has ordered the sakhis, “Don’t allow Krishna to come here!” [Then] Krishna flatters [the sakhis], “Kindly let Me go.” “No sir, you cannot go.” This is Krishna. (Excerpt from a lecture on The Nectar of Devotion, Bombay, 10 January 1973).

In the following song, Govinda Das describes a wonderful way in which Krishna once broke Radharani’s angry mood. (Kamoda-raga)

go-rakha jāgāi śiṅgā-dhvani śuna-ite
jaṭilā bhikha āni dela
maunī yogeśvara mātḥa hilāyata
bujhala bhikha nāhi nela

1. Hearing the sound of a buffalo-horn, the cowherd people awakened. Bringing some alms, Jatila, the mother

of Abhimanyu, Radharani’s so-called husband, offered them to the beggar. Disguised as a beggar-yogi, Lord Krishna, the master of all yoga, was silent. He tilted His head. He would not accept the alms.

jaṭilā kahata taba kāhā tuhu māgata
yogī kahata bujhāi
tere vadhū hāta bhikha hāma leyaba
turitahi deha pāṭhāi

2. Jatila said: “What do You want, then?” The yogi said, “Your daughter-in-law should offer the alms with Her own hand. Only then will I accept them. Send for Her at once.”

parivaratā vinu bhikha leu yaba
yogī kahata hoye nāśa
tākara vacana śunite tanu pulakita
dhāi kahe vadhū-pāśa

3. “If I accept alms from you [and not from Srimati Radharani], then My yogi’s vow will perish.” Hearing these words, and the hairs of her body now standing erect, Jatila ran to the side of her daughter-in-law.

dvāre yogī-vara parama manohara
jñānī bujhala anumāne
bahuta yatana kari ratana-thālī bhari
bhikha deha tachu ṭhāme

4. Jatila thought the supremely charming yogi at her door must be a great sage. With great effort she gathered up some offerings and placed them on a jewelled tray.

śuni dhanī rai rāi āi kari uṭhala
yogī-niyaḍe hāma yāba
jaṭilā kahata yogī naha āna mata
daraśane hoyaba lābha

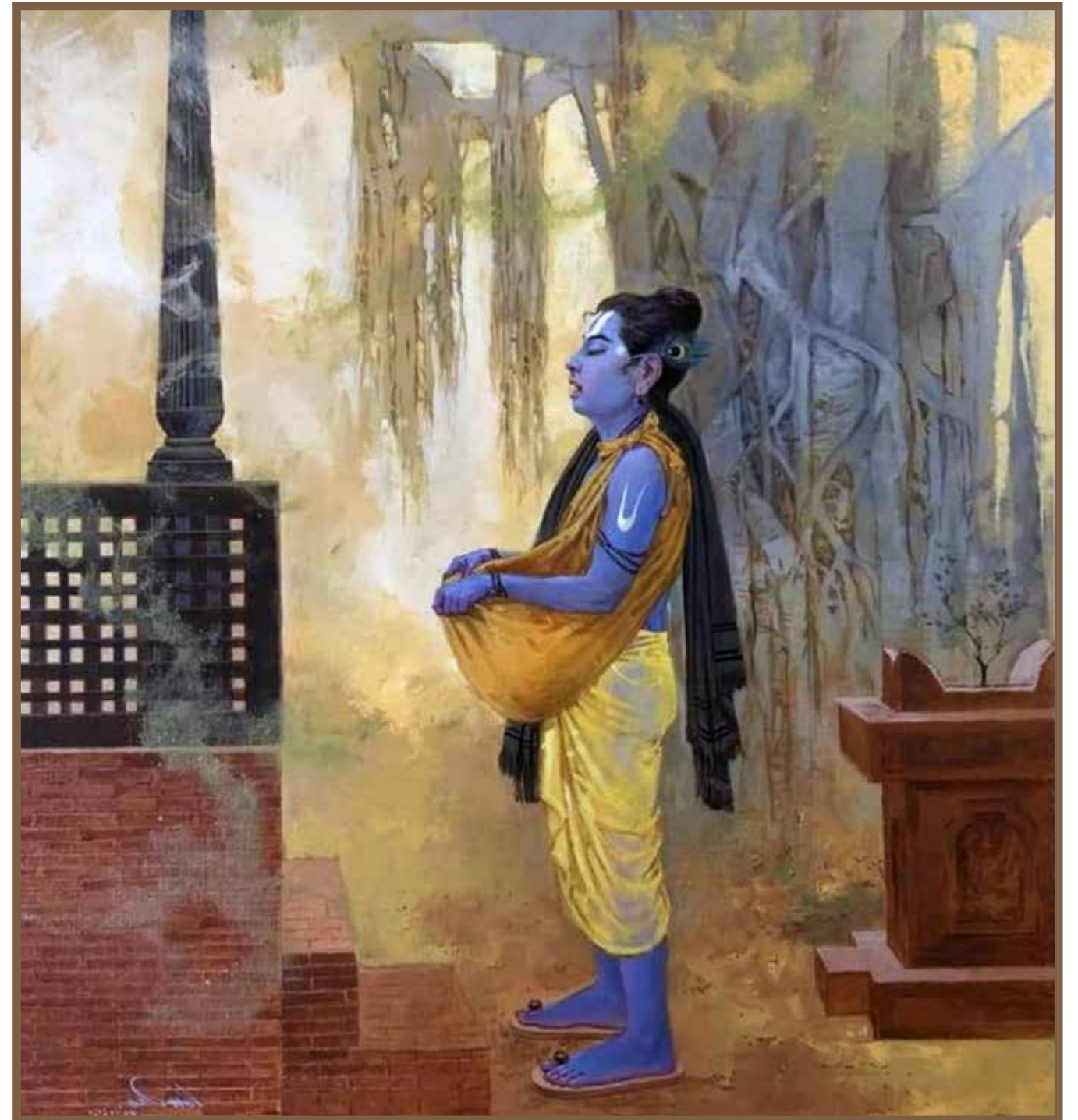
5. Hearing the commotion, beautiful Radha came. “I will go to the yogi,” She said. Jatila affirmed, “This yogi is not an ordinary man. Simply by seeing Him, one attains a great spiritual treasure.”

godhūma-cūrṇa pūrṇa thālī para
kanaka-kaṭhora bhari ghiu
kara-yoḍe rāi leha kari phukara-i
tāhe heri tharahari jīu

6. On the tray was an offering of wholewheat flour and a golden cup with some ghee in it. Taking the tray in Her hands, sighing with love and Her life’s breath trembling, Radha brought the offering to the yogi Krishna.

yogī kahata hāma bhikha nāhi leyaba
tuyā mukha-vacana eka cāi
nanda-nandana para yo abhimāna so
māpha karaha yāi

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja



Krishna came as a sannyāsī to beg for the alms of Srimati Radharani’s loving sulkiness

7. The yogi Krishna said, “I will not accept this offering yet. First, I wish to hear a single word from Your mouth. I am Nanda’s arrogant son. Say that You forgive Me, and then I will depart.”

śuni dhanī rāi cīre mukha jhāmpala
bhekha-dhārī naṭa-rāja
govinda-dāsa kaha naṭa-bara-śekhara
sādhi calata mana kāja

8. Hearing these words, beautiful Radha covered Her face with Her cloth. Then Krishna, the king of dancers, took the alms.

Govinda Das says: His heart’s mission accomplished, Lord Krishna, the crown jewel of all dancers, took His leave. — Srila Govinda Das Thakur Padavali song 122.



Radharani Becomes a Mendicant

From Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu issue 37

A song by the poet Yadunath Das

There are several Gaudiya Vaishnava poets named Yadunath Das and it is difficult to distinguish them. The following song of one Yadunath Das, written in the brajabuli language, is spoken by Srimati Radharani, and it also reflects the mood of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Judging from the vivid descriptions of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in this Yadunath Das' poems, some scholars opine that he was present at the time of Mahaprabhu and saw the Lord. His songs are found in several of the earliest known Gaudiya Vaishnava songbooks, such as the mid-eighteenth century Saṅkīrtanāmṛta compiled by Dinabandhu Das, and the famous Kṣaṇadā compiled by an unknown vaiṣṇava.

gañje gañjuka gurujana tāhe nā ḍarāi
chāḍe chāḍuka nija pati āpada eḍāi

Let My superiors chastise me if they will! Let My husband divorce Me if he likes! That will be so much trouble avoided.

bale baluka pādāra loka tāhe nāhi ḍara
nā baluka nā ḍākuka nā yāba tāra ghara



When Srimati Radharani left the rāsa-līlā Krishna carried her on his shoulders; while the gopīs went searching for them

Let My neighbors speak ill of Me! I am not afraid of it. They may not speak to me or invite me, and I will not visit their homes.

dharama karama yāuka tāhe nā ḍarāi
manera bharama pāche bandhure hārāi

My religious duties may not be done. I do not care. My only concern is that I may not lose My lover through the waywardness of My mind.

kālā māṇikera mālā gāṇthi niba gale
kānu-guṇa-yaśa āmi pariba kuṇḍale

I will make a necklace of black precious stones [the color of Krishna] and boldly hang it around my neck. I will wear earrings of the wonderful qualities and fame of Krishna.

kānu anurāga rāṅgā basana pariya
deśe deśe bharamiba yogini ha-iyā

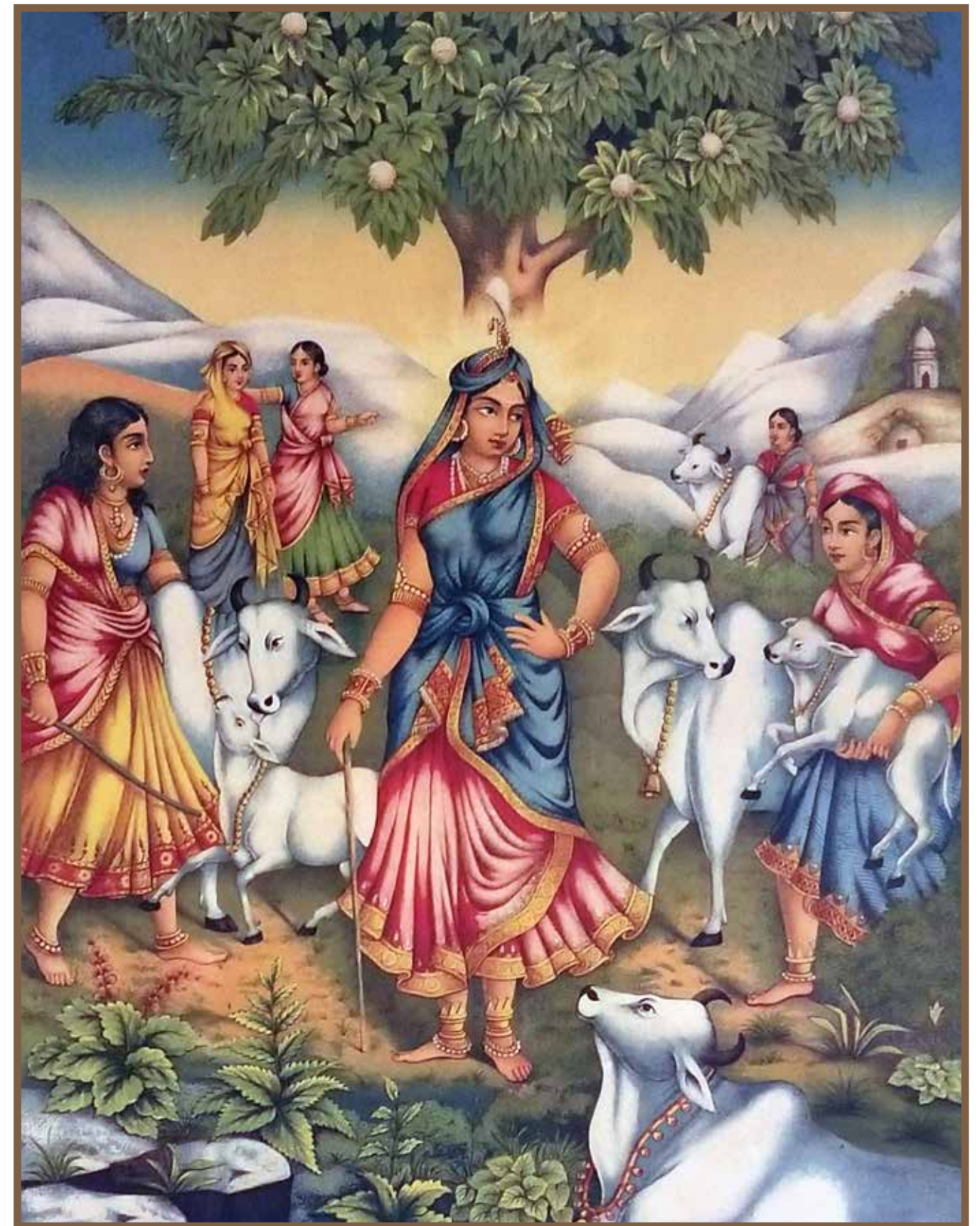
Clothed in a garment dyed saffron with my love for Krishna, I will become a mendicant yogini and wander about from land to land.

yadunātha dāse kahe ehi mane sādha
haya hauka jaga bhari kālā parivāda

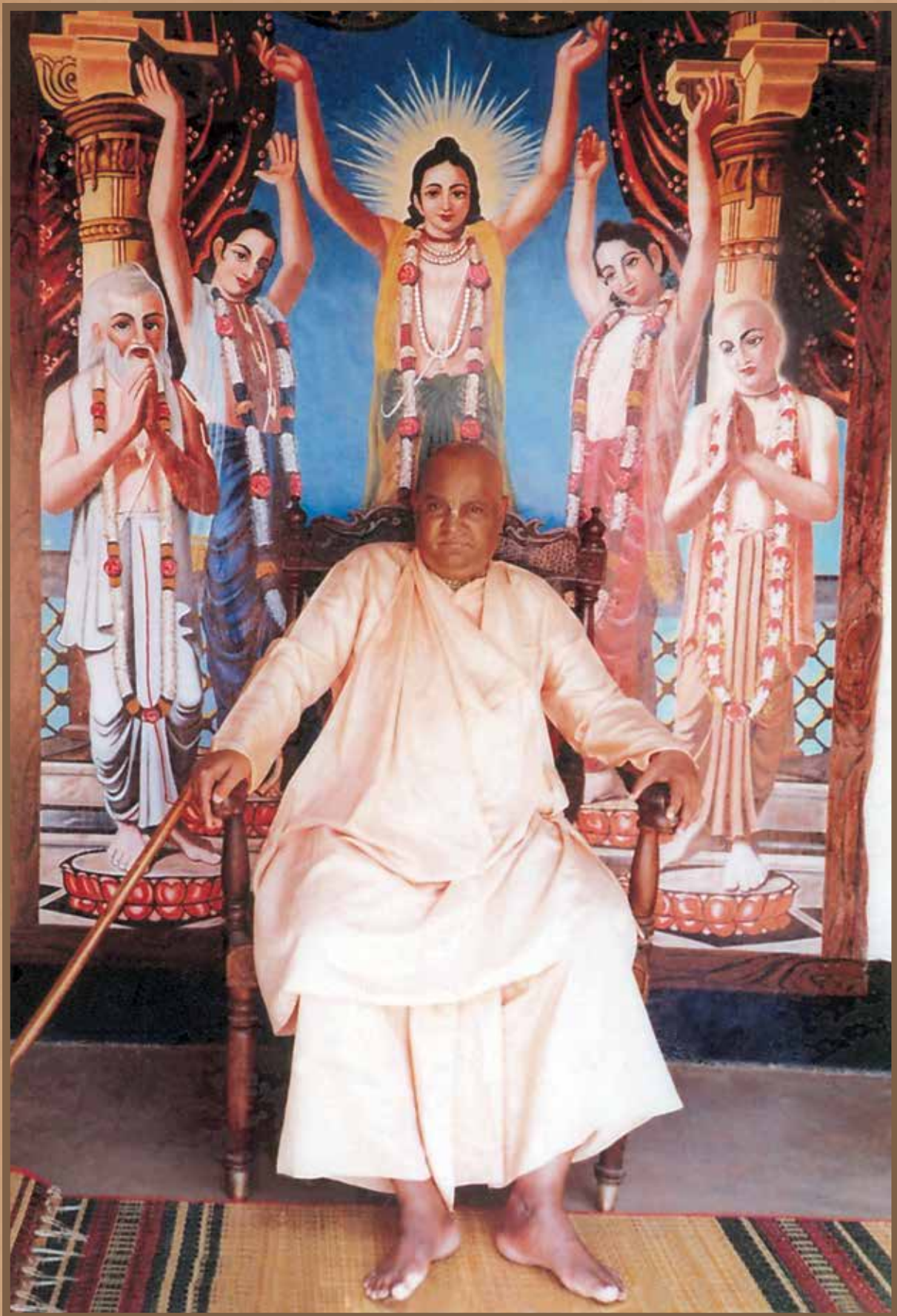
The author Yadunath Das [speaking on behalf of Srimati Radharani] says, "This is the desire of My heart. If the whole world speaks scandalously about [My relationship with] Krishna, then let it be so."

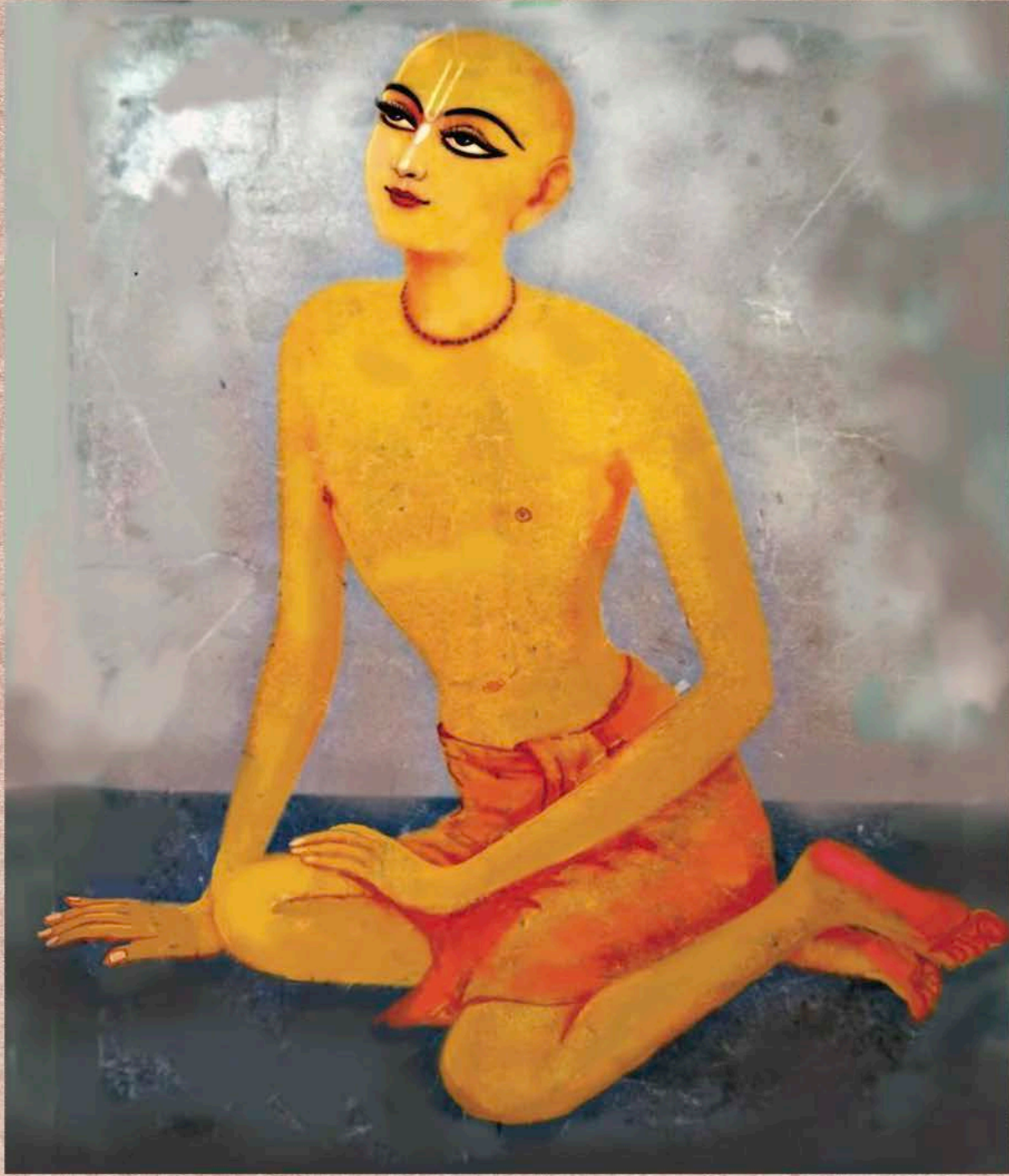
Bibliography

- Sukumar Sen. A History of Brajbuli Literature. University of Calcutta. Calcutta. 1935.
- Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī compiled by Hare Krishna Mukopadhyaya. Sahitya Samsad. Calcutta. 1980.



Srimati Radharani once dressed as a cowherd boy to be close to Krishna





“Today there was a mahotsava, a great festival. *Prasādam* was distributed and *bāla-gopāla-līlā*, your childhood pastimes, were recited. Prabhu Gopal, for a long time I have had a desire to hear songs of *māna-bhañjana-līlā*, stories of how Krishna breaks the sulkiness of Srimati Radharani. *Prema-mayī* Radharani had developed *abhimāna*, loving pride, and Krishna was experiencing intense *viraha-kātara*, pangs of separation, because Radha would not permit him to see her. Therefore there was a need for *māna-bhañjana*. Today, by the mercy of Prabhu, it happened. *Vṛndāvana-bihārī*, Krishna, became *rādhā-prema-bhikārī*, a beggar of Radha’s love. My Gopal dressed up like a *sannyāsī* to beg *prema-dhana* from Radharani. O Prabhu Gopal, please make me a *yogī*, a *sannyāsī* like that! I don’t need anything, Prabhu. I am not asking you for material opulence, respect, glory, or anything else.” — Entry from Gour Govinda Maharaja’s personal diary 10 October 1973.